

**'THE MEANS OF SEEING':
LOOKING AT REALITY IN THE NOVELS OF THOMAS HARDY**

by

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SYNOPSIS

Hardy approached the problem of nineteenth-century realism as an ontological and literary concern largely through images of perception. This thesis suggests that Hardy adopted an innovative approach in an effort to identify the term, and argues that his subversive contribution to the Great Debate occasioned the necessary impetus for the experimental fictions of the twentieth century. In rejecting the orthodox, aesthetic prescriptions established by such authorities as George Eliot and Henry James, it is suggested that Hardy released the Victorian novel from its restricting reliance on ostensibly objective fact and paved the way for a more subjective interpretation of reality and a more introspective kind of narrative.

It is contended that Hardy's literary response to a range of optical treatises encouraged his challenging reinterpretation of reality. As a preparatory measure, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* metaphorically petrifies the perspective; *Far from the Madding Crowd* interrogates Ruskin's theory of moral perception; *The Return of the Native* looks at phenomena through an intellectual lens; *The Mayor of Casterbridge* judges a reality filtered through a sartorially-inclined public eye instructed by Carlyle; *The Woodlanders*, the turning point in the sequence, observes with an eye disillusioned by the evolutionists; *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* creates a reality from the affective eye championed by Comte and Fourier; *Jude the Obscure* wanders blindly between two literary eras, perceptual incoherences, and dislocations between phenomenal and noumenal compromising the narrative's formal integrity.

This thesis maintains that, through an idiosyncratic frame of referentiality as well as regard, Hardy transforms the objective, material world into his own versions of reality, and triumphs over oppressive facts by subjectively appropriating them. Each of Hardy's works offers an alternative yet equally viable perceptual angle from which the creation, form, and function of reality as a psychological, practical, ontological, and literary concern can be judged.

To Mum

For believing (in) me

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Approx. 83,000 words

ABBREVIATIONS

- CL: *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).
CP: *The Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy*, ed. James Gibson (London: Macmillan, 1976).
EL: F.E. Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840-1891* (London: Macmillan, 1928).
LN: *The Literary Notebooks of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Lennart A Bjork, 2 vols (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985).
LY: F.E. Hardy, *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy, 1892-1928* (London: Macmillan, 1930).
PNB: *The Personal Notebooks of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Richard Taylor (London: Macmillan, 1978).

The following essays are cited in *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, ed. Harold Orel (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1966; London: Macmillan, 1967):

- PRF: 'The Profitable Reading of Fiction' (1888), pp. 110-25.
CEF: 'Candour in English Fiction' (1890), pp. 125-33.
SF: 'The Science of Fiction' (1891), pp. 134-8.
D:R 1: 'The Dynasts: A Rejoinder [1]' (1904), pp. 141-4.
D:P 2: 'The Dynasts: A Postscript [2]' (1904), pp. 144-6.
GP: General Preface to the Novels and Poems (1912), pp. 44-50.
LLE: 'Late Lyrics and Earlier: Apology' (1922), pp. 50-8.

The following works are the London: Macmillan edition of 1975:

- DR: *Desperate Remedies* (1871), intro. C.J.P. Beatty.
PBE: *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873), intro. Ronald Blythe.
HE: *The Hand of Ethelberta* (1876), intro. Robert Gittings.
La: *A Laodicean* (1881), intro. Barbara Hardy.
TT: *Two on a Tower* (1882), intro. F.B. Pinion.
WB: *The Well-Beloved* (1897), intro. J. Hillis Miller.
D: *The Dynasts* (1903-8), intro. John Wain.

The following novels are the Harmondsworth: Penguin edition of 1978:

- UGT: *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), ed. David Wright.
FMC: *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), ed. Ronald Blythe.
RN: *The Return of the Native* (1878), ed. George Woodcock.
TM: *The Trumpet Major* (1880), ed. Roger Ebbatson.
MC: *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), ed. Martin Seymour-Smith.
W: *The Woodlanders* (1887), ed. James Gibson.
TD: *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), ed. David Skilton.
JO: *Jude the Obscure* (1895), ed. C.H. Sisson.

'The Understanding is indeed thy window, too clear thou canst not make it; but Fantasy is thy eye, with its colour-giving retina, healthy or diseased.'

(Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, III.III)

'Moments of Vision'

That mirror
Which makes of men a transparency
Who holds that mirror
And bids us such a bare-breast spectacle see
Of you and me?

That mirror
Whose magic penetrates like a dart,
Who lifts that mirror
And throws our mind back on us, and our heart,
Until we start?

That mirror
Works well in these night hours of ache;
Why in that mirror
Are tincts we never see ourselves once take
When the world is awake?

That mirror
Can test each mortal when unaware;
Yea, that strange mirror
May catch his last thoughts, whole life foul or fair,
Glassing it - where?

I

INTRODUCTION: THE RETINA AND REALITY

Vision is performed by having a picture...painted in one piece,
instantaneously, on the retina, or last nervous part of the eye.¹

The Understanding is indeed thy window, too clear thou canst not make it;
but Fantasy is thy eye, with its colour-giving retina, healthy or diseased.²

For the eye sees not itself,
But by reflection, by some other things.³

Hardy approached and explored the problem of nineteenth-century realism as an ontological and literary concern largely through images of perception.⁴ Though mid nineteenth-century philosophical speculation is in part characterized by the distinct emphasis it placed on the senses, its recognition of the supremacy of sight was not a Victorian invention. The concept originated in the works of Horace and Cicero;⁵ during the eighteenth century the consensus was, according to Addison, that 'our sight is the most perfect and delightful of all our senses';⁶ Coleridge acknowledged the 'despotism of the eye' in 1817,⁷ and by 1850 the optical faculty stimulated the most interest and enjoyed the most attention in all areas of intellectual enquiry. J.S. Mill described 'the commanding influence' of sight from a philosophical perspective, referring, in Hardyesque fashion, to the numerous 'impressions' it was capable of receiving simultaneously.⁸ Alexander Bain similarly stressed 'the great superiority of the eye, as a medium for perceiving the outer world', and in 'discriminating and of identifying natural

¹ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), in *The Works of Edmund Burke*, 8 vols (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854), I, 49-181 (I, 149).

² Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus: The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh* (1832; London: Chapman & Hall, 1870), Bk. III, Ch. III.

³ William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, I. ii. 64-5.

⁴ For a contextual study of Hardy and Victorian realism, see the appendix. For a thorough examination of Hardy's history among the critics, see Peter Widdowson's 'Critography' in *Hardy in History: A Study in Literary Sociology* (London: Routledge, 1989), and the introductory, 'Hardy our Contemporary?' in *Thomas Hardy* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1996).

⁵ Horace, *De Arte Poetica*; Cicero, *De Oratore*.

⁶ Cited in Ronald Paulson, *Emblem and Expression: Meaning in English Art of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), p. 48. Wordsworth's 'Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*' (1802), in *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. Michael Mason (London and New York: Longman, 1992), pp. 55-87; Appendix, pp. 87-93, claims that 'the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favourite guides' (p. 77).

⁷ S.T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (1817), ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, vol VII *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn, 16 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), VII (i), first paragraph of Ch. VI.

⁸ J.S. Mill, *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* (1865), ed. J.M. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), p. 229.

things, and also for the storing of the mind with knowledge and thought'.⁹ It was generally agreed that sight was 'the *first of all human sensibilities*'.¹⁰

In 1865, however, Lewes was still anxious about his contemporaries accepting

the part played by the Principle of Vision in Art. Many readers who will admit the principle in Science and Philosophy, may hesitate in extending it to Art, which, as they conceive...is independent of the truth of facts, and is swayed by the autocratic power of the imagination...Properly understood there is no discrepancy between the two opinions.¹¹

Hardy was instrumental in promoting this acceptance by going to 'Science and Philosophy' in the first instance. One of the deciding factors in his literary inquisition of vision was an early familiarity with Spencer's *Principles of Psychology* (1867) where he discovered the notion that it was in 'the various lights reflected from objects around us and concentrated on the retina, that we find the elements of feeling most intimately woven up with the elements of relation'.¹² Spencer's description of 'the multitudinous states of consciousness yielded by vision'¹³ adumbrates the perceptive, affective psychology that motivates Hardy's study of reality. Hardy was equally conversant with Newman's argument in *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (1870) for the co-operation of sight and knowledge:

Sights...sway us...The strong object would make the apprehension strong. Our sense of sight is able to open to its subject...Since we cannot draw the line between the object and the act, I am at liberty to say...that, as is the thing apprehended, so is the apprehension.¹⁴

Though Hardy adopted the empiricists' example and acknowledged the authority of the senses, especially sight, in the acquisition of knowledge, his thesis argues that sight does not automatically confer knowledge. Like Lewes, Hardy recognized the insufficiency of isolated physical sight; Perception, the working of the mind's eye, is crucial in presenting

⁹ Alexander Bain, 'Sense of Sight', in *The Senses and the Intellect* (1855; London: Longmans, Green & Co., 4th edn., 1894), pp. 222-59 (pp. 239, 259).

¹⁰ Bain, 'Perception', in *The Senses and the Intellect*, pp. 384-421 (p. 392).

¹¹ G.H. Lewes, 'The Principles of Success in Literature', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 (1865), 85-95, 'The Principle of Vision': 185-96, 'Of Vision in Art': 572-89, 697-709 (p. 583, 196, 572). Lewes continues the discourse in *Fortnightly Review*, 2 (1865), 257-68, 689-710.

¹² Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Psychology*, 2 vols (1867; 2nd edn, London: Williams & Norgate, 1870), I, 169-70.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (1870; London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1909), pp. 36-7.

unapparent facts to Consciousness: 'Were it not for this mental vision supplying the deficiencies of ocular vision, the coloured surface [of things] would be an enigma'.¹⁵ Bain too, could not 'see how, with the eye *alone*, we can ever pass from the internal consciousness to the external perception - to the recognition, knowledge, and belief of things out of, or apart from, ourselves'.¹⁶ Thus Hardy's epistemology, like Bain's, understands all of the senses working in unison: physical observation, subjective processes, sensational experience, and the phenomenal world collaborate in a highly expressive way to promote knowledge and define its parameters. As Ruskin professed in volume IV of *Modern Painters* (1856):

It is with sight as with knowledge... 'If any man think that he knoweth anything, he know nothing yet as he ought to know.' And in the same sense: if any man think he seeth, he seeth nothing yet as he ought to see.¹⁷

Arnheim, modernizing Spencer's psychology of perception, forges an explicit parallel between seeing both as an objective, epistemological process, and a subjective, creative function:

The cognitive operations called thinking are not the privilege of mental processes above and beyond perception but the essential ingredients of perception itself. I am referring to... active explorations, selection, grasping of essentials, amplification, abstraction... Visual perception is visual thinking.¹⁸

Arnheim's treatise not only attends to the 'active striving for unity and order' in the world that is known as it is subjectively constructed, but addresses the polemic in which Hardy took such an active part a century before: 'Far from being a mechanical recording of sensory elements, vision proved to be a truly creative apprehension of reality - imaginative, inventive, shrewd, and beautiful'.¹⁹ Gregor appreciates that in Hardy's world 'we cannot understand what we know unless we know how we know it'.²⁰ knowing is an

¹⁵ Lewes, 'The Principles of Success in Literature', 1, p. 189.

¹⁶ Bain, 'Perception', in *The Senses and the Intellect*, p. 388. He continues: 'Many have contended for, and many more have assumed, this power as attaching to vision. But, in so doing, they seem to have fallen into a confusion of idea respecting the mental nature of this perception of an outer world' (ib.). Distance and dimension 'cannot be perceived or known through the medium of sight alone' (p. 389).

¹⁷ *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: George Allen, 1903-12). Hereafter cited parenthetically as *Works* in the text. This passage, in VI, 75, n. 1, is the first version of the related passage in VI, 75-6, and occurs in the MS of V, Ch. IX. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Plato confesses that 'sight is the keenest of our physical senses, though it does not bring us knowledge' (*Phaedrus*, trans. Walter Hamilton (Harmondsworth: Penguin 60s Classics, 1995), p. 36).

¹⁸ Rudolph Arnheim, *Visual Thinking* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 13.

¹⁹ Rudolph Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 5.

²⁰ Ian Gregor, *The Great Web: The Form of Hardy's Major Fiction* (London: Faber & Faber, 1974), p. 64.

open-ended, mutable series of sight-patterns, and the creation of reality is a continuous visual process. As Bullen explains,

in the way in which Hardy chooses to describe his watchers, the literal act of observation often modulates into a metaphor for judging; seeing and understanding are closely related, and frequently the verb 'to see' refers equally to sight and to understanding.²¹

Phenomena existing in Hardy's reality appear autonomous, incomprehensible and once removed because they are observed through a kaleidoscope of shifting perspectives. In addition, the constant presence of an uncertain pair of subjective eyes between the perceived object and the reader means that knowledge is mediated by the associative significance the individual consciousness chooses to apply to or withhold from the experience. Because Hardy 'deals with the exposure of the individual mind to all the forces and illusions that assault the single, lonely self', personal experience is transformed into absolute significance; it is always the subjective perception and interpretation which is supreme in knowing and creating reality: 'Elective affinities in the structure of Hardy's novels derive from the constructions his characters are prepared to put on all they see and remember.'²²

Hardy concluded 'The Profitable Reading of Fiction' (1888) with the observation that "'the eye sees that which it brings with it the means of seeing'" (*PRF*, p. 125). This borrowing from Carlyle's *The French Revolution* (1837) provided a literary complement to Spencer's scientific exposition of the affective impact that 'multitudinous states' have 'on the retina', and exerted a profound impact on Hardy's perceptual aesthetic:

For indeed it is well said, 'in every object there is inexhaustible meaning; the eye sees in it what the eye brings means of seeing'. To Newton and to Newton's Dog Diamond, what a different pair of Universes; while the painting on the optical retina of both was, most likely, the same!²³

²¹ J.B. Bullen, *The Expressive Eye: Fiction and Perception in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 75.

²² David Lodge, Intro. to *The Woodlanders* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1977), pp. 18-19.

²³ Thomas Carlyle, *The French Revolution*, Part One, Book I, Ch. II, 'Realized Ideals'; also in *Past and Present*, Book IV, Ch. I, 'Aristocracies'. See also 'Lecture III: The Hero as Poet', in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, & the Heroic in History* (1841), intro. Michael K. Goldberg (Oxford and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 67-97: "'the eye seeing in all things what it brought with it the faculty of seeing!'" (p. 80). Cp. Blake's 'Every Eye sees differently. As the Eye, Such the Object', in 'Annotations to Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses'. Edmund Burke, however, forwards the opposite proposition: 'We do and we must suppose, that as the conformation of their organs are nearly or altogether the same in all men, so the manner of perceiving external objects is in all men the same' (*A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, I, 54).

Even when making ostensibly simple observations, 'to see means to see in relation',²⁴ for all perceptions are coloured by what the eye sees and what the mind knows. The only exemption is the 'camera eye' of the scientific realist, a clinical perspicacity which

represents the findings of a "trained" eye, an analytic and self-conscious eye, conscious of what it sees and the way it sees; the kind of eye that teaches us to see those retinal images that we rarely take note of apart from the...transformations of the ordinary human mind.²⁵

Hardy's visualizing technique synthesizes rather than isolates the individual potential of the imagination, emotions and senses to precipitate reality, the quality that is seen and known. As Spencer, Carlyle and Hardy all concur, we actively perceive a personally significant image, and, 'projecting ourselves, we select with a multitude of influences that have already selected us'.²⁶

Though Hardy's literary methodology differed from, even antagonized, the majority of his contemporaries, his experimentalism was encouraged by an atmosphere which emphasized the visual aspect of fiction. Along with James and Stevenson, he 'admitted that we live in an age of the optic nerve in literature' (*LN*, II, 2219),²⁷ and pursuing his singular means of seeing, Hardy cultivated his ability to linguistically paint pictures saturated with affective associations.²⁸ Joseph Conrad's summation of his own mission, 'by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel...before all to make you see',²⁹ was, according to Witemeyer, 'a commonplace of Victorian aesthetics': 'We know from the popularity of literary illustrations that the Victorian audience liked to "see" its fiction, and novelists catered to the same taste by providing abundant visual description'.³⁰

²⁴ Arnheim, *Visual Thinking*, p. 54.

²⁵ Alan Spiegel, *Fiction and the Camera Eye* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1976), p. 112.

²⁶ Sheila Berger, *Thomas Hardy and Visual Structures: Framing, Disruption, Process* (London and New York: New York University Press, 1990), p. 74.

²⁷ *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. Sidney Colvin (London, 1889), I, 315-6.

²⁸ Norman Page, *Thomas Hardy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), suggests the terms "narrative paintings" and "visual literature" (p. 72), and explains that although the *Oxford English Dictionary* records the term 'genre painting' in 1873, as Hardy was beginning his career, the commodity itself had already been in circulation for a generation.

²⁹ Joseph Conrad, Preface to *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* (1897). For a discussion of the two writers, see Martin Ray, 'Hardy and Conrad', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XII:2 (May 1996), 82-3.

³⁰ Hugh Witemeyer, *George Eliot and the Visual Arts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 1-2. But the visualization of the novel's action was not the exclusive concern of the author. Reginald Terry, *Victorian Popular Fiction, 1860-80* (London: Macmillan, 1983), claims that 'the growth of illustration in periodicals is...part of the popular fiction' (p. 27); Norman Page, 'Hardy's Forgotten Illustrators', *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*, 77:4 (Summer 1974), 454-463, contends that 'the presence of illustrations was no more than an archaic publishing convention, taken for granted by readers and obediently supplied by editors' (p. 454). Graphic woodcuts

The retina is especially susceptible to suggestive impressions, and a graphically intense rendition of phenomena through verbal imagery is quintessential Hardy. Vigar notices the creation of 'clear precise pictures which... epitomize a whole work in a single memory... One "sees" what one is reading; the words paint some kind of corresponding image in the mind'.³¹ The uncertain reference to 'some kind of corresponding image' pinpoints the indeterminacy of the process which equates eye and image, language and subjective impression, and addresses an inherited anxiety. In 1757, Burke declared that

Nothing is an imitation further than as it resembles some other thing; and words undoubtedly have no sort of resemblance to the ideas for which they stand... [A]ll verbal description... conveys so poor and insufficient an idea of the thing described.³²

And 1870 found Newman articulating his concern in the context of sight: 'Words which are used by an eye-witness to express things, unless he be especially eloquent or graphic, may only convey general notions'.³³

But G.H. Lewes's conscious inconsistency is the most effective indicator of the problem's complexity. His explanation that the eye, 'as the most valued and intellectual of our senses', produces 'the majority of metaphors', implies that language, which 'after all, is only the use of symbols', is sufficiently powerful to generate a sketch or resemblance of the original sensation with such intensity and accuracy that the reader can mentally revisualize it, and 'is said to see' it.³⁴ Having gathered, like Hardy, his theories on the

certainly allowed the reading public to 'see its fiction', and the illustrations 'helped immensely to bridge the intervals' and were 'a handy aide-memoire' (Martin Meisel, *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 53). Philip V. Allingham, 'A Consideration of the Illustrations for *The Return of the Native*, Jan-Dec 1878, by Arthur Hopkins', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 23 (Winter 1996), 44-63, says that 'the image is far more lasting, in face, than the momentary impressions of scene and character derived from the initial reading, and may connote more than the text itself denoted'; the illustrations 'condition the reader's response to the text, causing him to compare "word-picture" to plate' (p. 44). The accompanying pictures fixed scenes in the reader's mind, and offered 'a perceptive visual interpretation', a 'narrative-pictorial synthesis', a 'series of snap-shots of telling moments' in the novels (Philip V. Allingham, 'Six Original Illustrations for Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Drawn by Sir Hubert Von Herkomer', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, X:1 (Feb 1994), 52-70 (pp. 53, 55). For discussions on the engravings for Hardy's novels, see Arlene Jackson, *Illustration and the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman & Littlefield, 1981); David Winslow, 'Thomas Hardy and Hubert Von Herkomer', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, VII:1 (Feb 1991), 41-9; Trevor Johnson, 'Peter Reddick', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, X:3 (Oct 1994), 36-9; Philip V. Allingham, 'Robert Barnes' Illustrations for Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* as Serialised in *The Graphic*', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 28:1 (1995), 27-39; Pamela Dalziel, 'Anxieties of Representation: The Serial Illustrations to Hardy's *The Return of the Native*', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 51:1 (1996), 84-110. For more general examinations of Victorian illustration, see Forrest Reid, *Illustrators of the Eighteen Sixties* (London: Faber & Gwyer, 1928; rpt. New York: Dover, 1975); Meyer Schapiro, *Words and Pictures: On the Literal and Symbolic in the Illustration of a Text* (The Hague: Mouton, 1973); Perry Nodeman, *First Words About Pictures* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988).

³¹ Penelope Vigar, *The Novels of Thomas Hardy: Illusion and Reality* (London: Athlone Press, 1974), p. 14.

³² Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, I, 178, 180.

³³ Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, p. 33.

³⁴ G.H. Lewes, 'The Principles of Success in Literature', *Fortnightly Review*, I, p. 583.

expressive possibilities of an appeal to sight from Ruskin, Lewes 'strongly favoured the use of artistic and visual imagery in literature'.³⁵ But, says Witemeyer, he also felt that 'the images which language evokes in a hearer's mind can never be identical with those in the speaker's mind; they can only be analogous',³⁶ and in acknowledging the conflict between form and subject, Lewes casts doubt on the representative adequacy of language. Literary realism is simultaneously limited by formal prescriptions and engaged in disturbing those prescriptions; it assumes an empirical position, but is anxious about the link language maintains with the world anterior to the narrative. Deconstructive criticism confronts literature from this 'tradition of "difference"' ('All similarities are produced out of difference...The force of difference undermines the traditional concerns of origin and unity'³⁷), dislocates associative connections with the external world and regards such figurative inclusions in literature as artificial: 'Language is from the start fictive, illusory, displaced from any reference to things as they are'.³⁸

The later Victorian novelists challenge 'the conventions of order they inherit but struggle to construct a world out of a world deconstructing'.³⁹ Hardy in particular works within these disjunctions and decentred formations, but rather than fighting against collapse, he reverses the potential for chaos, works toward fragmentation and creates a vision of coherent inconsistencies. Graphic metaphors are synthesized at the point where multiple antithetical images violently collide,⁴⁰ and more recently, criticism has explored imagistic language as a source of creative unification rather than disjunction and disintegration: 'In poetry at least, metaphor joins dissimilars not so much to let us perceive them in some previously hidden similarity but to create something altogether new'.⁴¹ It is a concise commentary on Hardy's strategy which saw and manipulated the

³⁵ Witemeyer, *George Eliot and the Visual Arts*, p. 40.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Vincent B. Leitch, 'The Lateral Dance: The Deconstructive Criticism of J. Hillis Miller', *PMLA*, 6 (Summer 1980), 593-607 (pp. 594, 595).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 597.

³⁹ George Levine, *The Realistic Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 4.

⁴⁰ Morton Zabel, 'Hardy in Defence of His Art: the Aesthetic of Incongruity', in *Hardy: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. A.J. Guerard (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1963), pp. 24-45, notes that Hardy uses a 'poetic method' in fiction through his 'tendency toward metaphorical values'.

⁴¹ Karsten Harries, 'Metaphor and Transcendence', *Critical Inquiry*, 5 (Autumn 1978), 73-90 (p. 73).

power of metaphor to redescribe the world, to "remake" reality'.⁴² In a self-conscious response to its incipient disorder and plurality, *The Dynasts* has

hundreds of individual poetic structures emerge in an incremental but flexible surfacing of varied human efforts to systemize reality through or in response to language. These poetic structures in turn become metaphors of human reality.⁴³

It is applicable to the rest of the Hardy canon.

In this context, Berger's explanation of how 'the transformation of image into icon, of external matter into subjective meaning, defines and establishes Hardy's view of the "essential tendencies of the human [modern] mind"',⁴⁴ is of critical significance. Hardy reworks a visually-oriented tradition by translating particularized things into metaphors of universal significance. An associative bond is established between image and eye as individual texts evaluate the sufficiency of a selected school's perceptual tendency, and provide a succession of alternative positions from which the creation, form and function of reality as a psychological, practical, philosophical and literary concern can be assessed. Though each pair of eyes dictates a different perspective, their function is common, to define the reality of phenomena, a pursuit which takes up the challenge formulated by Turner 'in his maddest and greatest days: "What pictorial drug can I dose a man with, which shall effect his eyes somewhat in the manner of this reality which I cannot carry to him?"' (*EL*, p. 283; Jan 1889). Hardy was unable to 'carry' this 'reality' to his readers because empiricism had persuaded him into believing in the non-existence of objective reality, and his technique, rejecting the 'optical effects' of scenic reality, instead approaches things' unseen, latent qualities: imaginative mediation between the given and the abstract produces 'the All' (*EL*, pp. 242-3; Aug 1887). Hardy's reappraisal of monistic philosophy, which projects meaning onto matter, bombards the outer realm with

⁴² Paul Ricoeur, 'The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling', *Critical Inquiry*, 5 (Autumn 1978), 143-59 (p. 154).

⁴³ William E. Buckler, *The Victorian Imagination: Essays in Aesthetic Exploration* (New York: New York University Press, 1980), p. 347. R.N. Furbank, *Reflections on the Word 'Image'* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1970), considers the limits of discussing *The Dynasts* as if it were a 'whole' or a 'unity'. 'It hasn't "a" structure, it has an infinity of structures' (p. 119).

⁴⁴ Sheila Berger, *Thomas Hardy and Visual Structures*, p. 54

multiple perspectives, and, with the sublimation of 'hundreds of individual poetic structures',⁴⁵ undermines the concept of an absolute reality.

Given the operation of so many perceptual permutations and variables ('how are we to explain this apprehension of things, which are one and individual, in the midst of a world of pluralities and transmutations...?'⁴⁶), the quest for the All is exacerbated further by the physiological 'inaccuracies and imperfections of the eye as an optical instrument' itself and 'those which belong to the image on the retina',⁴⁷ and the subjective interpretation of this sense-data. These inherent flaws obstruct a clear-sighted understanding of reality, yet Hardy seizes upon them as opportune and uses them as the basis for his deliberately defective, optically-focused thesis. Like Hardy's novels, reality is '*Relativity* combined with *Subjectivity*' (LN, I, 705),⁴⁸ an amorphous 'series of seemings, or personal impressions'⁴⁹ which resist fixity and explication because ontologically dependent on the fusion of physical observation (looking) and subjective interpretation (perceiving) by fallible seers. Characters are incapacitated by this 'limited personal vision',⁵⁰ and the onus falls on the reader to gauge the veracity of that vision.

According to Kiely, Hardy can manage his characters no better than they can manage one another

unless he assumes a point of departure from which they can be seen and tentatively judged. Yet, as the narrative moves us from one vantage point to another...we cannot give full assent to the apprehension of any single character. We are constantly confronted ..with the limitation of human vision.⁵¹

Even those views sanctioned by the narrative eye - Oak's, Elizabeth-Jane's, Giles's and Marty's, for instance - are prey to insufficiency given the complex perceptual structures in which they operate; the realities of Hardy's novels distance themselves from any rationalized system and approach the incongruous. His 'sudden shifts in standpoint

⁴⁵ Buckler, *The Victorian Imagination*, p. 347.

⁴⁶ Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, p. 111.

⁴⁷ H.L.F. von Helmholtz, *Popular Lectures on Scientific Subjects* (First Series, 1873; Second Series, 1881), p. 269.

⁴⁸ Auguste Comte, *System of Positive Polity*, trans. E.S. Beesley, R Congreve et al., 4 vols (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1875-77), III, 511.

⁴⁹ Preface to First Edition of *JO*.

⁵⁰ Lawrence O. Jones, 'Imitation and Expressionism in Thomas Hardy's Theory of Fiction', *Studies in the Novel*, 7 (1975), 507-25 (p. 513).

⁵¹ Robert Kiely, 'Vision and Viewpoint in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, 23 (Sept 1968), 189-200 (pp. 197-8).

challenge the complacency and narrowness of one vision', and though 'the sensible models' may 'keep the novel from ending in total confusion and despair', the counter provision of 'doubt and mockery'⁵² undermines the arrogant assumption of a proper perspective.

Through his canon, Hardy catalogues the search for a 'point of departure', but the journey is undertaken with the 'melancholy recognition that in a universe of perpetual change one never gets it right for very long'.⁵³ Yet, despite its imperfections, the retina fixes the informative sense-data and realizes its potential when protagonists experience a visual epiphany. Because emotionally impressionable, this sensitive faculty abandons subsequent interpretations of that image to the mercy of the perceiver's current mood, that 'idiosyncratic mode of regard' (*EL*, p. 294; April 1890) which, itself unstable and unpredictable, constantly reconfigures the essential significance of the phenomenal world. Seeing and perceiving can never interact with any degree of certainty when the governing premises themselves are fundamentally mutable.

Hardy's obsession with the retina seems predicated upon Ruskin's 'intellectual lens and moral retina, by which, and on which, our informing thoughts are concentrated and represented' (*Works*, IV, 36), though this is neither to ignore nor disqualify other influences. This dual-purpose eye is present in every inspection of reality, Bathsheba's momentary and localized moral '*gutta serena*' (*FMC*, LIII) maturing and intensifying over twenty-one years into the generally annihilative intellectual dysfunction which paralyzes *Jude the Obscure*, the intervening novels standing as various stages along that evolutionary (or devolutionary) path. The retina most brutalized by an impression-engraving undoubtedly belongs to Boldwood, though it is not an unprecedented episode either in Hardy (it occurs in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*) or Victorian fiction (*Villette* and *Middlemarch* may be possible influences). The suggestiveness of the material catalyst, the valentine, is powerful enough to appropriate his mind and will so thoroughly that subsequent perceptions and interpretations of objective reality are damaged by subjective excess. Central to the immediate occurrence and postponed repercussions of these

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 198.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

optical scorchings is memory, and for Ruskin, as for Hardy, 'a more essential truth' is revealed when these startling Moments of Vision are 'recall[ed] by intuition and intensity of gaze' (*Works*, IV, 284). Transferred to the memory where it is compounded by time, the image becomes the experience, and for years after is mnemonically called forth by the associative recognition of an equivalent material stimulus.

Such brandings are not just empirical precipitates but transcendent visual episodes which transform the mundane and offer a figurative amalgamation of Locke's belief in the passive receptivity of the (empirical) eye and the active creativity of the (imaginative) eye of Berkeley and Shelley. Yet Hardy's compromise, in which he assumes the ambiguous role as empiricist-cum-poet, obfuscates rather than clarifies the issue. The senses of the isolated psyche may be stimulated into activity by various essentially fixed and dead objects, but the fallibility of the mind's eye, buffeted by numerous contending faculties, renders psychological confusions, optical incongruities and formal inconsistencies inevitable. Hardy's experimental and experiential treatment of reality refuses to conform to any kind of prescriptive formulae whether they underpin empirical philosophy or govern realistic fiction.

Hardy's subversion of traditional realistic fiction threatened the superiority of the visual metaphor underpinning the polemic in England and on the Continent: the mirror. The self-reflexive title poem of the *Moments of Vision* (1917) volume provides an illusive, interrogative definition of reality as regarded through this medium, and typifies Hardy's literary theory and practice (poetry and prose) in its inclusive applicability of one ambivalent word, 'vision'. On a literal level it invokes the objective, physical act of seeing; a metaphysical point of view registers an imaginative, visionary state conducive to eidetic experiences, the clairvoyant ability to foresee the future equalling the potency of hindsight granted by memory. As the title indicates, we are shown 'moments', frozen stills which momentarily petrify the larger continuity of life, and revise prosaic realities as extraordinary. These static moments (there is also the implication of the momentous or serious) appear as both fleeting 'fugitive impressions' (*LLE*, p. 53) and preserved mental photographs.

Hardy's designed manipulation of the inclusivity of these visions reflects the complex ambivalence of the narrator's own point of view as he slips from interested but ignorant observer to an involved, omniscient witness. The former strategy enables Hardy to secret himself behind a range of scenes, characters and objects which separate him from the reader, and to abnegate authority over the autonomy of phenomena which are beheld as

something seen but not tampered with, something scrupulously watched in its otherness, something perceived but not made over...[S]omething seen...something there, it is an effect on the retina, it is a configuration of matter.⁵⁴

Simultaneous authorial absence and visual presence drags the reader into an experience analogous with the characters' and suggests that the reality presented is both 'a reaction to the external world, and a protection against it...a transformation of the reaction into a shape which imitates it at a distance'.⁵⁵ But Hardy is inextricably involved in the creative process, and his vacillation between giving information and then standing as no more informed than the reader exposes the limits of the narrative eye and voice; and of vision. The images summoned through language are there to be challenged; reality, meaning, is not finite.

Hardy's literary application of perceptual and philosophical ideologies teaches that meaning and knowledge are accomplished through process. By synthesizing different visual techniques, he tilts and remodifies the realistic lens he is expected to use and, in true Coleridgean fashion, dissolves, diffuses, dissipates in order to recreate not only the impression, the visible essence of what he *feels* reality to be, but to reproduce the precise and sharply-delineated photograph (however much he opposed the analogy) of things as they *are*. But any objective reflection invariably submits before a psychic light which transforms the eye into a magic lantern, and impressions stored on the retina are projected onto the blank, receptive screen of the external world. Then another perspective endows the eye with an elasticity which encourages it to roam with metaphysical liberty, and, rotating around the object of scrutiny, it sees all of it in its

⁵⁴ Tony Tanner, 'Colour and Movement in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *Critical Quarterly*, 10 (Autumn 1968), 219-39 (p. 219).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

totality in a single glance, understanding it as a complete material expression as spatial and temporal parameters are exploded. Once facts are transcended and logic dismissed, the eye begins to access 'mysteries', and, in Newman's words,

after proceeding in our investigations a certain way, suddenly a blank or a maze presents itself before the mental vision, as when the eye is confused by the varying slides of a telescope.⁵⁶

Then the mesmerized roving eye is arrested by some detail hitherto unnoticed and the reality of the stimulus is recreated anew.

This kind of mobility and selectivity defines how reality is known in Hardy. His 'whole way of seeing' is indeterminate and protean:

If a Hardy novel is a 'series of seemings'...it is because no single way of seeing will do. Vision, to be inclusive enough, must be from this angle, and that, and this; and the multiple perspectives do not fuse so much as sustain one another by a sense of interweaving.⁵⁷

Reformation is continuous, indefinite and inconclusive; the point of view never settles; the perceiver suffers constant anxiety over seeing and holding all of the separate parts together, and Hardy's perceptual dilemma finds a distinct echo in Empedocles's complex dissection of his want of single vision:

Hither and thither spins
The wind-borne, mirroring soul,
A thousand glimpses wins,
And never sees a whole;
Looks once, and drives elsewhere, and leaves its last employ.⁵⁸

Bain, too, acknowledged

the peculiar power of the eye to embrace at one glance a wide prospect, although minutely perceiving only a small portion...When the glance is carried along the field of view, the portions that cease to occupy the centre of the eye still impress the retina, and have a place in the consciousness, though much less distinctly perceived.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, p. 52.

⁵⁷ Mark Kinkaid-Weekes, 'Lawrence on Hardy', in *Thomas Hardy After Fifty Years*, ed. Lance St John Butler (London: Macmillan, 1977), pp. 91-103 (p. 102).

⁵⁸ Matthew Arnold, 'Empedocles on Etna' (1852), in *The Poems of Matthew Arnold*, ed. Miriam Allott (London and New York: Longman, 2nd edn., 1979), I. ii. 82-6.

But however meticulous and adventurous the scrutiny, Hardy understood alongside Ruskin that 'WE NEVER SEE ANYTHING CLEARLY...[T]here is literally *no* point of clear sight, and there never can be. What we call seeing a thing clearly, is only seeing enough of it to *make out what it is*' (*Works*, VI, 75-6). Burke's comparable, anticipatory sentiment - 'the eye not being able to perceive the bounds of many things, they seem to be infinite' - suggests that 'discoveries' are made by perceiving 'the contrast' between phenomena 'which would escape us on the single view'.⁶⁰ Hardy's phenomenology sees 'contrary imaginings' formalized in the novels' inclusive perceptual concerns:

These multiple perspectives and efforts to name the world emblemize the dialectical relationship between the ambiguity, chance and uncertainty of 'reality' and the desperate human will to negotiate with the unknown, through rhetoric, to make it known.⁶¹

Though Hardy's technique reconstructs these convictions in graphic detail, it fails to resolve the fundamental dilemma: total and determined comprehension of reality is precluded by the unavoidable contingency of selective representation. Hardy engages this problem by pushing the significant potential of 'vision' to its limits, his innovative methodology discovering and exposing the insufficiency of received prescriptions. Given the unprecedented strain of his experimentalism, Hardy's doctrine is necessarily an accumulation of personally-formulated, inconsistent and eclectic instructions. In every sense, he is 'a kaleidoscopic image maker',⁶² one for whom 'kaleidoscopic fragments are recomposed into images that seem to have a corresponding reality of their own',⁶³ and though we may for a second see the essence of this process, it is all but impossible to master an unobscured view of the entirety.

The composite effect of the Hardy canon, a revolutionary and expansive Moment of Vision, bridges almost half a century, yet despite the unrelenting interrogation of the state through poetry and prose, the enigma remains.⁶⁴ The conclusion reached by

⁵⁹ Bain, 'Sense of Sight', in *The Senses and the Intellect*, p. 256.

⁶⁰ Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, I, 101, 50.

⁶¹ Berger, *Thomas Hardy and Visual Structures*, p. 46.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁶³ Lewes, 'The Principles of Success in Literature', 1, p. 588.

⁶⁴ Hardy's 'strange mirror', reflecting the enigma of humanity, is, for Arnold too, symbolic of the ultimate Purpose in 'Empedocles on Etna' (1852):

The out-spread world to span

'Moments of Vision' itself is as uncertain and as mysterious as the enquiries from which it is composed; the nagging questions remain unanswered because there is no answer. The mirror simply reflects and the reflected impressions are preordained by the perceiver's temperament; *that* is the predetermining factor in Hardy's 'moments of vision'. There is no Prime Mover save the human eye and the preconceptions it brings to the acts of observation and perception. Hardy's literary re-interpretation of Carlyle's 'means of seeing' draws on the 'inexhaustible meanings' supplied by a veritable spectrum of influential thinkers and schools of thought. And, as in all searches, discoveries are implicit in premises.

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A cord the Gods first slung,
 And then the soul of man
 There, like a mirror, hung,
 And bade the winds through space impel the gusty toy. (I. ii. 77-81)

II

THE 'PETRIFIED EYE':¹

FIXED MOMENTS AND THE VISIBLE NARRATIVE IN *A PAIR OF BLUE EYES* (1873)

"Realism" is not art.²

But the greatest thing by far is to be master of metaphor...[I]t is a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars.³

What we call reality is a certain connexion...that is suppressed in a simple cinematographic vision...which the writer has to rediscover in order to link... the two sets of phenomena which reality joins together....[T]ruth will be attained by him only when he takes two different objects...and encloses them...[W]e succeed in extracting their common essence and in reuniting them to each other, liberated from the contingencies of time, within a metaphor.⁴

A Pair of Blue Eyes, appearing only one year after *Under the Greenwood Tree*, belongs to the group of novels Hardy classified as 'Romances and Fantasies'.⁵ Within the space of one year Hardy was clearly feeling his way in two very different directions. Whereas the earlier novel could 'claim a verisimilitude in general treatment and detail' (*GP*, p. 44), the later and its subsequent companions were conceived with another purpose in mind: 'the interest aimed at is of an ideal or subjective nature, and frankly imaginative' (*WB*, Pref); objective 'verisimilitude' is 'subordinated' to the expression of the individual's perceptual psychology; the locality, imbuing a personal significance, is 'pre-eminently...the region of dream and mystery' where a 'ghostly...atmosphere like the twilight of a nightmare' (*PBE*, Pref) reigns supreme.⁶

¹ *PBE*, Ch. 22.

² *EL*, p. 299; Aug 1890.

³ Aristotle, *The Art of Poetry*, trans. Ingram Bywater, ed. W. Hamilton Fyfe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), Ch. 22, p. 62. See George Eliot's apostrophe in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), ed. A.S. Byatt (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979): 'O Aristotle! if you had had the advantage of being "the freshest modern" instead of the greatest ancient, would you not have mingled your praise of metaphorical speech as a sign of high intelligence, with a lamentation that intelligence so rarely shows itself in speech without metaphor, - that we can so seldom declare what a thing is, except by saying it is something else?' (2.1). On the other hand, G.H. Lewes's praise for Goethe in part resides on his figurative economy: his work is 'vivid with pictures, but with scarcely any extraneous imagery. Most poets describe objects by metaphors or comparisons; Goethe seldom tells you what an object is like, he tells you what it is' (Lewes's emphasis; *The Life and Works of Goethe* (1855; London: Dent, 1908), Book I, Chapter II, p. 53).

⁴ Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans C.K. Scott Moncrieff, et al, 3 vols (New York: Random House; London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), III, 924-5.

⁵ See Norman Page, 'The Well-Beloved and Other Hardyian Fantasies', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, VIII:3 (Oct 1992), 75-83, for an interpretation of what Hardy meant by "Romances and Fantasies", whether this is really one group or two' (p. 76).

⁶ It was this 'imaginative' licence which alienated contemporary critics and thus gave rise to the mythic construction of Hardy as a

The quasi-real dimension of *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, in relying on the 'ordinary incidents' and 'material circumstances' (*PBE*, Pref) surrounding contemporary church restoration, pretends to satisfy the demands of Victorian realism even while it exploits them. The extraordinary is integrated so entirely into the credible that Hardy appears not to have departed from life's fundamental truths: after all, 'strange conjunctions of phenomena, particularly those of a trivial everyday kind, are so frequent in ordinary life that we grow used to their unaccountableness' (*PBE*, Ch. 8), and the narrative's graphic strategy intensifies the paradox generated by unusual commonalities. Imaginative concentration upon these repeated features synthesizes image and eye, the resulting visual metaphors being significant and suggestive enough to represent the progress and shape of the narrative while still retaining their inherent mysteriousness.

This subjective and experimental treatment of perception and reality represents a new artistic departure. In *Under the Greenwood Tree*, verbal pictures act as illustrations accompanying the tale; the narrative is as slight as the corresponding images, and the pictures themselves, far from developing the story-line, interrupt and suspend forward movement. The analogous pictorial images of *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, however, are functional and establish a formal correlation between the narrative and the impressions through which it is conveyed. As autonomous moments of vision, the tableaux show rather than tell; authorial interpolation is avoided or minimized; plot details are visualized through the most approximate physical equivalents.

This integration of form and subject matter confirmed *A Pair of Blue Eyes* as 'the most artistically constructed of the novels of its time', but Hardy's cynical response attested that such methodology accounted for little 'in these days of loose construction and indifference to organic homogeneity' (*EL*, p. 126; Sept 1873). Its geometrical patterning and proleptic balancing anticipates the disharmonies and incongruous rhymes of more ambitious works such as *Jude the Obscure* and *The Well-Beloved*, and 'strikes a new balance between ingenuity and straightforwardness of plot'.⁷ In these later works,

sensationalist/melodramatic/artificial/gloomy/pessimistic writer, epithets directed toward Hardy's refusal to satisfy the current desire for faultless 'realism' or 'verisimilitude'. The mystery surrounding the bibliographical "ghost" known as Hardy's "discarded" preface to *A Pair of Blue Eyes* is usefully summarized by Michael Millgate in his 'The "Discarded" Preface to *A Pair of Blue Eyes*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XIII: 3 (Oct 1997), 58-9 (p. 58).

⁷ Richard Taylor, *The Neglected Hardy: Thomas Hardy's Lesser Novels* (London: Macmillan, 1992), p. 36.

basic symmetries have evolved into formal asymmetries as Hardy manipulates a narrative which avoids fragmentation even while it incorporates dissonant elements. Johnson appreciated Hardy's 'unity of design...an excellence rarely desired now' as his crowning 'distinction',⁸ his allusions to Hardy's 'almost architectural feeling for constructive unity'⁹ being of especial pertinence given the power 'with which his designs hold the memory: it resembles the power of architecture to stamp there its great designs'.¹⁰ The remembered image, engraved upon the pages of the inner eye, is crucial in compiling these repeated elements into an integrated whole:

Meaning appears in the arrangement of the whole. In the sub-patterning within his pattern Hardy displays full control of his irrational subject matter, giving it an expressive, poetic ordering and power.¹¹

Though control and simplicity are discovered 'not only in the collective impressions made by their definite outlines, but in the detailed effects of single, isolated passages or pages',¹² it is the composite effect which generates the best view of reality.

Perceptual incongruities typify Hardy's artistic exploration of reality and become more insistent and pronounced as the canon matures. Miller contends that 'the narrative fabric of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is woven of manifold repetitions - verbal, thematic, and narrative. At the same time, it is a story about repetition'¹³ like *A Pair of Blue Eyes* which builds its narrative pattern from awkward juxtapositions. Such "flaws" attracted critical censure: 'A more serious fault in the eyes of the novel-reader is the persistent repetition of the same situations. The critical situation is nearly always the same',¹⁴ contrived stylizations accentuate the sense of dislocation or displacement, and in the macabre group composition in the Luxellian crypt, along with the episode in which Knight's life is held by Elfride's underwear, the incongruity of the disjunctions approaches

⁸ Lionel Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy* (1894; rpt. London: The Bodley Head, 1923), pp. 48, 42-3.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-9.

¹¹ Sheila Berger, *Thomas Hardy and Visual Structures: Framing, Disruption, Process* (London and New York: New York University Press, 1990), p. 14.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 42. For a discussion of Johnson on Hardy, see Joanna Cullen Brown, 'An Approach to Hardy: Lionel Johnson', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XI:1 (Feb 1995), 75-78.

¹³ J. Hillis Miller, 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles: Repetition as Immanent Design', *Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 116-49 (p. 116).

¹⁴ Havelock Ellis, 'Thomas Hardy's Novels', *Westminster Review*, CXIX, n.s. LXIII (April 1883), 334-64; rpt. *Thomas Hardy: Critical Assessments*, ed. Graham Clarke, 4 vols (Sussex: Helm Information Ltd, 1993), III, 27-51 (III, 49). Hereafter cited as TH:CA.

a kind of Modernist absurd. The same scenes are reiterated at predetermined points in the narrative from an altered perspective, and though the successive discrepancies are slight, the effect they exert on the interpretation of the original is immense.

The unprecedented ingenuity of such distracting shifts and perceptual reconfigurations aggravated and disturbed Hardy's contemporaries; even Johnson's laudatory treatise calls the occasional 'artificiality...and eccentricity of mechanical contrivance'¹⁵ into question. The critique approaches *A Pair of Blue Eyes* in particular with caution, and addresses the 'coincidences, contrasts, [and] oddities of circumstance', tentatively qualifying them as 'almost wholly natural and justifiable, yet with a touch of a light extravagance'.¹⁶ Despite these reservations, Johnson is one of the first to notice the structural necessity of these visual echoes, and to trace how Hardy observes and presents Elfride, Smith and Knight 'in various combinations, repeating the same scenes'¹⁷ with artistic subtlety. It was the replication of a unique and singular vision which later drew the admiration of Marcel Proust who identified genius by its interminable desire to repeat the same pattern, to write the same novel over and over again:

The great men of letters have never created more than a single work, or rather have never done more than refract through various media an identical beauty which they bring into the world.¹⁸

Proust commended this experimental and exploratory type of poetical integrity and recognized the formal potential of such visual symmetry. The 'stonemason's geometry in the novels of Thomas Hardy'¹⁹ incorporates individual set pieces as well as the larger narrative framework, and extends throughout the series:

Do you remember the stonemasons in *Jude the Obscure*, and in *The Well-Beloved* the blocks of stone...and in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* the parallelism of the tombs...and in short all those novels which can be superimposed on one another.²⁰

¹⁵ Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, p. 58.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, III, 382.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, III, 383. 'The Well-Beloved, together with *Jude the Obscure* and *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, remained in Proust's mind throughout the writing of his *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu* (1913-37). See George Painter, *Marcel Proust: A Biography*, 2 vols (New York: Random House, London: Chatto & Windus, 1959, 1978), II, 154. It was between 1906 and 1910 that Proust read the three novels. See

The most memorable parallel, however, is the eponymous pair of blue eyes itself, for it is in these that text and metaphor converge, and Elfride, as the visible materialization of the title, is the character in whom image and narrative ultimately meet. Three times these eyes are seen in a literary capacity: the title introduces them, the opening page admits us 'into' their 'history', in the last page they close (as does the book) and 'shut' us out. In between the novel's covers, as in between the eyes' lids, 'there she lived' (*PBE*, Ch. 1). Their fourth appearance in the cliff-hanger is of such imaginative magnitude that their metaphorical significance can easily be overlooked. Though Hardy introduces the eyes as physical facts, their illusive and evasive representation establishes them as noumenal as opposed to phenomenal entities:

In her eyes were seen a sublimation of all of her...there she lived. The eyes were blue; blue as autumn distance - blue as the blue we see between the retreating mouldings of hills and woody slopes on a sunny September morning. A misty shady blue, that had no beginning or surface, and was looked *into* rather than *at*. (*PBE*, Ch. 1)

Such passages construct not only the tangible actualities, the looks of definite objects; their 'surroundings and intervening atmospheres'²¹ are made equally accessible. Her eyes are, above all, experienced as an absence - they are 'looked *into* rather than *at*' - and are indeterminate and absolutely enigmatic, and despite an almost total omission of the material (excepting the subordinate reference to the formative 'mouldings' of hills and slopes), the paragraph captures with lucid acuity the essential conception of the subject. Only through figurative association with the closest external correlatives - the ephemeral and insubstantial - can the abstract even begin to acquire a visible quality. It is as if both the eyes and their possessor have no self-autonomy but exist as mirror reflections of their appearance in various perceivers' eyes. Elfride is not so much a creation as an observation.

Cahiers Marcel Proust: Le Carnet de 1908, ed. Philip Kolb (Paris: Plon, 1976), esp. pp. 18, 39, 41. Proust read *PBE* in *Les Débats* where it appeared between October and December of 1910. For a discussion of the influence that Hardy exerted on Proust's own work, see Peter J. Casagrande, *Hardy's Influence on the Modern Novel* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 110-33; also Robert Langbaum, *Thomas Hardy in Our Time* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 141-55. For a consideration of Proust's vacillating attitude to Hardy's fiction, see Frank G. Healey, 'Proust and Hardy - An Update', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, X:2 (May 1994), 51-7. See also Robert Fraser, *Proust and the Victorians: The Lamp of Memory* (London: Macmillan; New York: St Martin's Press, 1994), esp. Ch. 6: 'The Lamp of Geometry: Thomas Hardy' (pp. 140-67).

²¹ Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, p. 64.

The eyes' essential composition typifies their function, their idiosyncratic attitude - 'oblivious' to externals, 'unconsciously...dwelling' on subjective impressions (*PBE*, Ch. 17) - encouraging an artistic reproduction of an abstraction. A series of seemings or provisional speculations create the eyes by defining their (primary) intrinsic quality rather than their (secondary) extrinsic quantity:

Her eyes seemed to look at you, and past you, as you were then, into your future; and past your future into your eternity - not reading it, but gazing in an unused, unconscious way - her mind still clinging to its original thought. (*PBE*, Ch. 17)

Though able to transcend time and space, Elfride's 'mind', rather than accompanying her 'gaze' as an aid to 'reading', decoding and interpreting the vision, abandons the inner eye to isolation and impotence. True sight requires the combined energies of the physical and the inner eye, but while Elfride's is not a dynamic perspicacity, her eyes, though passive absences, actively sublimate the entire narrative: in them, in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, the past, present and future - Time - are regained.

This symbiotic design requires constant revision if the connection is to realize its most inclusive effect, and though Hardy's method relies on reading to fuse eyes and words, Elfride/her eyes/*A Pair of Blue Eyes* defy linguistic determinacy by 'preventing a material study of [their] lineaments'. There is 'form and substance', a 'combination' that is more than a simple accumulation of details, but Elfride and her story are constructed so as to prevent reaching that 'combination' (*PBE*, Ch. 1). Like the narrative, she exists as a mental impression before she does as a realized personality, and like succeeding heroines (especially Sue) is little more than a projection or manifestation of her creators' subjective fantasies and ideals. Though 'reduced to a mysterious text open to male exegesis',²² Elfride is not as 'open' or as accessible as Devereux suggests. We expect to learn her, to 'know', to discern a coherent pattern, but mastering the epistemological question involves more than simple, unmediated observation. Mere 'watching' will neither

²² Jo Devereux, 'Thomas Hardy's *A Pair of Blue Eyes*: The Heroine as Text', *Victorian Newsletter*, 81 (Spring 1992), 20-3. For a discussion of Hardy's heroines as texts, see Patricia Ingham, *Thomas Hardy* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), and Penny Boumelha, *Thomas Hardy and Women: Sexual Ideology and Narrative Form* (Brighton: Harvester Press; Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Nobles, 1982). See my 'The Feminine Text: Reading and Knowing Hardy's Women', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 26 (Dec 1997), 29-33, for a discussion of this metaphor with particular reference to *DR*, *PBE*, *FMC* and *WB*.

translate the secrets of her 'history' nor permit the text of her life to be read and deciphered.

Reading this heroine's optical text extends the technique of *Desperate Remedies* where Cytherea's face, yielding its meaning to Springrove's visual enquiry, experiences a kind of violation: 'She had not meant him to translate her words...so literally', and she is distressed at 'his learning' of her secret (*DR*, 3.2). *A Pair of Blue Eyes* prohibits such simple exegesis by integrating the heroine's reality, her very ontology, with the suggestive rather than the definitive aspects of the work. In fact, Elfride is a literary compilation, a result of her 'reading so many...novels' (*PBE*, Ch. 1), a formative past-time which incites her first to wield a pen to process herself through her narratives,²³ and then to invite determination. Knight operates under the misguided assumption that his 'reading' of Elfride will let him 'know' her, but he is ignorant of the 'trick of reading truly the enigmatical forces at work in women' (*PBE*, Ch. 20) and anticipates the illiterate state of Boldwood, both lacking the prior experience which discloses a reality, something more substantial than words, detectable by an accustomed reader of the female text.²⁴

From the outset it is Elfride who teaches her critic the 'real meaning' (*PBE*, Ch. 17), the correct interpretation, of her novels and, by inference, herself, yet there remains the insinuation that words conceal no real profundity, that the verbal screen covers nothing at all. Thus, when Knight returns to his misogynist tracts and begins 'reading them now by the full light of a new experience', he convinces himself he can 'see how much more his sentences meant than he had felt them to mean when they were written' (ib.). In this textually-oriented world - similar in intensity but not in form to those encountered in *The Return of the Native* and *The Woodlanders*²⁵ - words cannot be avoided, yet retain an implacable inscrutability. Knight is not changed by what he has written, but he is confirmed; and neither he nor Elfride is able to live or exist outside words.

²³ The tactic employed by the tale-telling heroine of *The Hand of Ethelberta* (1876).

²⁴ Whether such a reader actually exists is central to *JO* and the problem of Sue.

²⁵ See Jonathan Wike, 'The World as Text in Hardy's Fiction', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 47:4 (1993), 455-71. Wike studies 'legible faces' as secondary texts. See also Paul Freire and Donald Macedo, *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987).

However concentrated their study, the characters are unequal to the linguistic conundrum and transfer their illiteracy to the actual reader of the novel. Mrs Swancourt boasts

'an extraordinary power in reading the features of our fellow-creatures...I always am a listener...not to the narratives told by...tongues, but by their faces - the advantage...is that...they all speak the same language.' (*PBE*, Ch. 14)

Her arrogant inability to realize that such scripts do not 'speak the same language' is a substitute for the reader presumptuous enough to suppose that Elfride will submit to 'open' interpretation; she mirrors our over-ambitious desire to discern convenient familiarities and coherences in the novel and its optical equivalent. And Hardy is there in the background managing our responses: he jeopardises the fundamental authenticity of his narrative by questioning whether any text can be successfully read while providing the tantalizing suggestion that a coherent design might reside beneath the superficial contradictions; but, then again, the subject matter, Elfride herself, like her textual history, 'perhaps' enjoys a 'proneness to inconstancy' (*PBE*, Ch. 27). This type of narrative sabotage is encouraged by the reader's expecting the narrative to conform to conventional realistic prescriptions. Our misperceptions are equally culpable.

The equivocal, metaphorical presentation of Elfride and her eyes initiates the strategic intrusion of proleptic repetitions, each successive iteration remodifying and expanding the suggestiveness of the principal symbol. The reality constructed through the antagonistic demands of intellect and emotion is scopically conceived:

Even when dwelling on personal details, and when describing the love inspired by them as entering entirely through the eye, he gives an expressiveness to their beauty which would excuse, even if it could not satisfy, a more idealizing attachment.²⁶

The movement from the abstract to the concrete transforms visual image into action. Knight's eyes are instructed only by an 'abstract knowledge' of women (*PBE*, Ch. 18), and, as Elfride shares a 'resemblance to his ideal' (*PBE*, Ch. 19), she becomes

²⁶ Anon., *New Quarterly Magazine*, II (Oct 1879), 412-31; rpt. *TH:CA*, III, 3-12 (III, 6).

progressively more etherealized and unearthly to his sight. Refusing to admit Elfride a reality anterior to his preconceptions, Knight 'attentively regard[s] her' only when she is refined, 'sublimated in his memory' and reduced to a 'subject of contemplation' (*PBE*, Ch. 20). Nurturing 'images of her [in]...his mind', he falls in love, he professes, 'with her soul', and rejects her corporeality so entirely that her 'disembodiment' makes him 'forget all collateral subjects in the pleasure of thinking about her' (*ib.*). The subjective experience becomes the real experience, a rigid idealistic criterion which proves fatal when it confronts external reality, and, prefiguring the devastating vision practised by Clare, a deconstructive paradox ensues. The 'rough dispelling of any bright illusions' Knight may have harboured toward Elfride, 'however imaginative, depreciates the real and unexaggerated brightness' which is its basis (*PBE*, Ch. 32). His idolatry so destroys her autonomy and phenomenal reality that when she admits her past she ceases to exist for him; he yearns for her 'to be again his own Elfride - the woman she had *seemed* to be' (*PBE*, Ch. 35) to his eyes.²⁷

The dislocation of inner and outer visions intensifies with each successive permutation, and when Knight deserts Elfride a moment of vision translates her into an image that is simultaneously objectified and subjectified:

He saw the stubble-field, and a slight girlish figure in the midst of it - up against the sky. Elfride...had hardly moved a step...He looked and saw her again - he saw her for weeks and months. He withdrew his eyes from the scene, swept his hand across them, as if to brush away the sight...and went on. (*PBE*, Ch. 34)²⁸

This Ruskinian 'recalling by...intensity of gaze'²⁹ the original sight precipitates the 'permanent impression' (*PBE*, Ch. 3) and dramatizes Hardy's recognition that 'the mental image shares a continuing identity with its object'.³⁰ This process lets the observer recapture the subjective picture in an arrested 'moment of vision' which, though altered in substance, remains unchanged in essence. But Knight is not a willing participant: his eye

²⁷ Or, one is tempted to say, his 'original Elfride' in anticipation of Giles's 'original Grace' (*W*, XXXVIII) and Clare's 'original Tess' (*TD*, LV).

²⁸ This futile physical attempt to 'brush away the sight' is later repeated by Elfride herself as she 'pressed her hand to her eyes, as if to blot out the image of Stephen' (*PBE*, Ch. 27).

²⁹ John Ruskin, *The Collected Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: George Allen, 1903-12), IV, 284.

³⁰ Joan Grundy, *Hardy and the Sister Arts* (London: Macmillan, 1979), p. 112.

is under attack; the invasive view haunts his consciousness 'for weeks and months' and condenses with the passage of time; his mind is, in the words of Dr Johnson, structured from memories and anticipations:³¹

The scene was engraved for years on the retina of Knight's eye: the dead and brown stubble, the weeds among it, the distant belt of beeches shutting out the view of the house, the leaves of which were now red and sick to death. (Ch. 34)³²

In true Carlylean fashion, Knight's 'eye brings with it the means of seeing' and interpreting, this iconic observation showing rather than telling how he perceives his relationship with Elfride: he notices only the barrenness of 'dead and brown stubble' and proceeds to make the affective association; 'the poetry of the scene' (*EL*, p. 66; Aug 1865) is dictated by his emotions. In this Tennysonian moment of intense passion which 'Might drown all life in the eye',³³ Hardy simultaneously realizes the simple truth of Eliot's observation that 'in our times of bitter suffering, there are almost always these pauses, when our consciousness is benumbed to everything but some trivial perception or

³¹ Samuel Johnson: 'The truth is, that no mind is much employed upon the present: recollection and anticipation fill up almost all our moments' (*Rasselas* (1759), Ch. 30).

³² Cp. Zola: 'l'oeil a retenu les tableaux qui l'ont frappé tout d'abord' (*Roman Expérimental* (1880), in *Emile Zola: Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. Henri Mitterand, 15 vols (Paris: Cercle du Livre Précieux, 1968), X, 1145-1401 (p. 1287)). Cp. the awful impressiveness of the nightmare for the heroine of Coleridge's 'Christabel', in *Coleridge: Poetical Works*, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: Oxford University Press, 1969). Memory keeps the vision alive, and certain images come to symbolize a specific emotional significance as do the images for Knight:

But though my slumber was gone by,
This dream it would not pass away -
It seems to live upon my eye! (Part II (1800), lines 557-9)

There is also a distinctly Rossettian element in Knight's predicament. Hardy seems to use beeches in place of Rossetti's willows in the four 'Willowwood' sonnets (nos. 49-52) in *The House of Life*, in *The Poetical Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, ed. William Rossetti (London: Ellis and Elvey, 1891). In both instances, the nightmare landscape is a terrifying soulscape inhabited by forlorn lovers, and each place is haunted with suggestions of anguish, deprivation and guilt. The last sestet of sonnet 51 is most apposite:

Alas! the bitter banks in Willowwood,
With tear-spurge wan, with blood-wort burning red:
Alas! if ever such a pillow could
Steep deep the soul in sleep till she were dead, -
Better all life forget her than this thing,
That Willowwood should hold her wandering!

³³ Alfred Tennyson, *Maud; A Monodrama* (1855), in *The Complete Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1898):

Strange that the mind, when fraught
With a passion so intense
One would think it well
Might drown all life in the eye, -
That it should, by being so overwrought,
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense
For a shell, or a flower, little things
Which else would have been past by! (II. II. viii)

In *Ruth*, ed. Alan Shelston (1853; Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), Elizabeth Gaskell makes effective use of the concept to explore the heroine's feelings when she is abandoned by Bellingham: 'She had no penitence, no consciousness of error or offence... Yet afterwards - long afterwards - she remembered the exact motion of a bright green beetle busily meandering among the wild thyme near her and she recalled the musical, balanced, wavering drop of a skylark into her nest, near the heather-bed where she lay' (Ch. VIII).

sensation'.³⁴ Knight may not be able to extract any lesson from the experience, but the image, dominated by trivial objects and impressed on the brain through the eye, expresses all that cannot be said or formulated even in thought. The prevalence of such detail is not employed simply to extend the narrative, but to penetrate into a fevered state of mind and, consequently, into a heightened state of perception.

The physical analogues provide the schema for what Coleridge termed the 'modes of inmost being' which 'cannot be conveyed, save in symbols of time and space',³⁵ and in this case they are overtly manifested. The composition is 'something seen, it is something there, it is an effect on the retina, it is a configuration of matter',³⁶ it is also an imitative metaphor of Knight's subjective operations, a figurative mirror,

a reflective surface...[It] looms up into the convexities of foreground... installed and revelatory, arranged and compelling. An obsessive memory or regret brings its own shape with it, insistent, crude...which requires a certain conscious display, disposition, arrangement.³⁷

Remembrance of things past seduces the mind's eye into interpreting and conferring significance, Hardy's revolutionary amalgamation of composition and experience, eye and image making sight condition matter. Though contrived, such retinal brandings are compelling because of the density of the expression:

In the face of pain, close observation can be threatening; so that observation, even with melodrama or occasional oddness of fit, testifies to fidelity... [S]cenes must be realized...even though the rendering tend toward the place of muted strangeness.³⁸

Hardy's use of this visual metaphor seems indebted to De Quincey's discussion of 'involution':

³⁴ George Eliot, *Adam Bede* (1859), ed. Stephen Gill (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), V. 39. Adam is concentrating on the clock in the passage in Mr Irwine's house.

³⁵ S.T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (1817), ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, vol VII of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn, 16 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), VII (ii), Ch. XXII, pp. 119-59 (p. 147).

³⁶ Tony Tanner, 'Colour and Movement in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *Critical Quarterly*, 10 (Autumn 1968), 219-39 (p. 219). The same process by which image and emotion are subjectively integrated to the point of synonymy, takes place on several occasions in the work of George Eliot. For example, in *Adam Bede* (1859) Adam recalls his first sight of Hetty and Donnithorne kissing: 'These thoughts about Arthur, like all thoughts that are charged with strong feeling, were continually recurring, and they always called up the image of the Grove - of that spot under the overarching boughs where he had caught sight of the two bending figures, and had been possessed by sudden rage' (V. 48).

³⁷ John Peck, 'Hardy and the Figure in the Scene', *Agenda*, 10:2-3 (1972), 117-25 (pp. 124-5).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

combinations in which the materials of future thought or feeling are carried... imperceptibly into the mind... Far more of our deepest thought and feelings pass to us through perplexed combinations of *concrete* objects, pass to us as *involute*s...in compound experiences incapable of being disentangled, than ever reach us directly, and in their own abstract shapes.³⁹

The involute 'of human sensibility' fixed in the memory is transmuted into the experience itself, mental objects assume a distinct presence, and, as Proust appreciated, 'what we call reality is a certain connexion between these immediate sensations and the memories which envelop us simultaneously with them'.⁴⁰ For Shelston, remembering accommodates both 'the unwilling memory that comes to us arbitrarily, and that act of willed memory by which we make our own attempt to summon up the past'.⁴¹ Knight's sensation clearly involves the former yet distinguishes between the mental eye 'as passive recipient and as active agent of recall'.⁴² His is no sedentary, empirical engraving but a stimulated visionary episode which surpasses the ordinary; yet he cannot control the images themselves. This is not to intimate that Hardy dismisses the empirical regarding impressions, but neither is imagination a substitute for memory. Hobbes, however, confusing the two, conceives imagination as a resource centre of sense impressions from which the artist makes his selection:

This *decaying sense*, when we would express the thing itself, I mean *fancy* itself, we call *imagination*, as I said before: but when we would express the decay, and signify that the sense is fading, old, and past, it is called *memory*. So that imagination and memory are but one thing, which for divers considerations hath diverse names.⁴³

Hardy, applying this involved procedure, effects an understanding between the mind's active and passive potential by fusing eye and object.

The mental repercussions are profound. The vision is 'engraved...on the retina' here as it will be in succeeding novels, Knight's exposed eye foreshadowing Boldwood's:

³⁹ Thomas De Quincey, 'The Affliction of Childhood', in *The Collected Writings of Thomas de Quincey*, ed. David Masson, 14 vols (Edinburgh, 1889; London: A and C Black, 1897) I, 128.

⁴⁰ Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, III, 924.

⁴¹ Alan Shelston, 'Thomas Hardy and the Literature of Memory', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XII:3 (Oct 1996), 45-56 (p. 46).

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁴³ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, or the Matter, Form and power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical*, ed. Michael Oakeshott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 10. Hobbes makes a mistake in making imagination (which is active and creative) synonymous with memory (which is a passive recalling). On their difference see G.H. Lewes, 'The Principles of Success in Literature', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 (1865), 85-95, 'The Principle of Vision': 185-96, 'Of Vision in Art': 572-89, 697-709 (p. 583); 2 (1865), 257-68, 689-710 (1, pp. 585-6).

'the bachelor's gaze was continually fastening itself, till the large red seal became as a blot of blood on the retina of his eye' (*FMC*, Ch. XIV). Yet whereas Boldwood strangely welcomes being optically possessed by, and being in possession of, this brand - transforming it from an objective 'red sea' to a subjective 'blot of blood' - Knight grieves over desiring a double dispossession or displacement; he hankers after a double absence, to be free from Elfride's impression mentally and physically, and is torn between longing and loathing.⁴⁴ Though he tries 'to brush away the sight' (*PBE*, Ch. 34), erasure is impossible given the tenacity of the vignette.

The subjectivism of Knight's *amour* is thrown into relief by Smith's objectivism, this perceptual inversion condensing into a representative image: 'Stephen fell in love with Elfride by looking at her: Knight by ceasing to do so' (*PBE*, Ch. 20). The sentence appears neatly balanced and the novel's overall design does match this trend, but the pattern is asymmetrical; the narrative insists on juxtaposing both men, and Elfride's early courting of Smith seems incomplete without its contrast: the later romance with Knight. Though formally and artistically awkward, such consistent antitheses clarify the inherent incongruence of the relationships themselves. Diametrically opposed to Knight's imaginative idealism, Stephen's superficial sensibility is stimulated by Elfride's 'appearance', the narrative eye contributing the textual implications:

Every woman who makes a permanent impression on a man is usually recalled to his mind's eye as she appeared in one particular scene, which seems ordained to be her special form of manifestation throughout the pages of his memory. (*PBE*, Ch. 3)

Proust later said that 'Time which changes human beings does not alter the image which we have preserved of them', and that pain accompanies 'this contrast between the mutability of people and the fixity of memory'.⁴⁵ Smith's inner eye is an immutable record, 'the pages of...memory' simply accumulate ready-made images, and the 'permanent impression' which preserves Elfride threatens the integrity of the subject as

⁴⁴ For a psychological reading of loss in Hardy's novels and poems, see M.L. Rosenthal, 'Hardy's Satires: Hard Knowledge, Ghostly Presence, Sexual Loss', *Southern Review*, 27 (Summer, 1991), 545-7.

⁴⁵ Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, III, 1036.

she becomes an object doomed to exist henceforth as part of a compendium of mental pictures. Stephen's eye converts the immediate beloved into an inaccessible divinity, and, with the aid of a conveniently-placed candle which 'forms the accidentally fizzled hair into a nebulous haze of light, surrounding her crown like an aureola' (*PBE*, Ch. 3), translates nature into art. Subsequent metamorphoses trace the future direction of the narrative, Knight later discovering Smith's drawings: 'There were large nimbi and small nimbi about their drooping heads, but the face was always the same' (*PBE*, Ch. 38).⁴⁶ Each character's apotheosis is worked out within the narrative and exhibited in an equivalent, visual metaphor, the focal design showing Elfride's progression through her relationships as her gaze relocates her affections:

That she looked up at and adored her new lover [Knight] from below his pedestal was even more perceptible than that she had smiled down upon Stephen from a height above him. (*PBE*, Ch. 25)⁴⁷

It is this kind of tableau, ostensibly controlled and managed by the scrutiny of those blue eyes - they are the pivot from which all else is perceptually measured - which fuses narrative and image.⁴⁸

The majority of these episodes reflect the 'lustrous and lurid contrasts' (*PBE*, Ch. 29) which structure the plot and direct the interplay between light and dark, often with bizarre results. The horrible shock of finding Elfride and Knight together washes over Smith in a coruscating array of 'dancing leaf-shadows, stem-shadows, lustrous streaks, dots, sparkles, and threads of silver sheen of all imaginable variety and transience' (*PBE*, Ch. 25). But this momentary, certainly momentous, visual paralysis subsides, and insubstantialities are displaced by a grotesquely concrete image which assures the inviability of the observed partnership: 'Part of the scene reached Stephen's eyes through

⁴⁶ D.G. Rossetti also exhibits a tendency to surround his lovers' heads with haloes. The ending of the 'Willowwood' sonnets finds Love enveloping the pair 'Till both our heads were in his aureole' (no. 51, line 14). Perhaps the two most obtrusive Rossettian moments in the Hardy canon take place in *UGT* (1. V), in which Fancy Day becomes a mirror-image, or parody, of 'The Blessed Damsel', and in the exotic description of 'Eustacia Syriaca' in *RN* (1. VII).

⁴⁷ See Stephen Kern, *Eyes of Love: The Gaze in English and French Paintings and Novels 1840-1900* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996), which identifies the compositional pattern of a current posture, and shows how the frequency of this proposal composition calls for a reconsideration of the belief that 'the gaze' holds women as merely passive erotic objects, and men as active erotic subjects.

⁴⁸ And this deliberate "patterning" is used by Michael Rabiger, 'Hardy's Fictional Process and his Emotional Life', in *Alternative Hardy*, ed. Lance St John Butler (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 88-109, to argue that *PBE* is a rewriting of the relationship design-scheme of Austen's *Emma* (see esp. pp. 91-3).

the horizontal bars of woodwork which crossed their forms like the ribs of a skeleton' (ib.).⁴⁹ As an epilogue to this macabre insight (exhibition), Smith encounters Mrs Jethaway with her synchronous predictions (exposition): 'The tale told by the little scene he had witnessed ran parallel with the unhappy woman's opinion' (ib.). The same is true of those examples which express the past, present and future reality of a situation in an iconic image. As the partnership of Elfride and Smith dissolves, 'their eyes met...Their glance, but a moment chronologically, was a season in their long history' (*PBE*, Ch. 27), an observation which is exploded by the illimitable significance of the text's central figure which appeared five chapters earlier.

The formal autonomy of *A Pair of Blue Eyes* spirals in to and out of its most expansive and sustained visual metaphor: the cliff-hanger.⁵⁰ This central chapter is the eye of a visual vortex, literally and figuratively, and offers an exact, poetical analogy of the novel's repetitive and contradictory structure; 'an epic hallucination that...represents the design of the book writ large',⁵¹ its strategic fusion of the actual and the symbolic throws up latent discrepancies and ambiguities. Hitherto, we have been preoccupied with smaller, controlled visions which can be caught in a single scanning. Now, visual flexibility is paramount if the larger significance is not to be missed as 'immense lapses of time' and a plethora of 'varied scenes' flash before us in an impressive 'momentary sweep'.⁵² As a preparatory measure, the narrative eye focuses on the cliff's "face": it is assigned a 'countenance'; Knight climbs 'the grim old fellow's brow'; slipping, he is saved

⁴⁹ Hardy may have had the Coleridgean nightmare-image in mind, which, if placed alongside *PBE*, seems uncomfortably prophetic:

Are those her ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?

Is Death that woman's mate? ('The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' (1798), Part III, 185-9).

⁵⁰ For an incisive analysis of this chapter in particular, see Perry Meisel, *Thomas Hardy: The Return of the Repressed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972); Tess Coslett, *The 'Scientific Movement' and Victorian Literature* (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press; New York: St Martin's Press, 1982), espec. pp. 132-68; and Harold Orel, 'Hardy and the Developing Science of Archaeology', *Thomas Hardy Annual*, No. 4, ed. Norman Page (London: Macmillan, 1986), 19-44. See also Lawrence Jones, 'Thomas Hardy and the Cliff without a Name', in *Geography and Literature*, ed. William E. Malloy and Housley Paul Simpson (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987), pp. 169-84.

⁵¹ Norman D. Prestiss, 'Compilation and Design in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XI:1 (Feb 1995), 60-74 (p. 65). Despite the title, this article contributes considerable space to the formal incongruities of chapter 22 of *PBE*.

⁵² The chapter suggests a Wilkie Collins influence early on in Hardy's career. *Basil* (1852) provoked sufficient critical disapproval to draw the attention of another rebel like Hardy and provided him with the original title of *Desperate Remedies*. But it is the sensational climax of *Basil* where Mannion falls over the cliff which is relevant: 'Close to the mouth of the abyss, he sprang up as if he had been shot. A tremendous jet of spray hissed out at him...then the waves roared fiercely in their hidden depths; the spray flew out once more; and when it cleared off, nothing was to be seen at the yawning mouth of the chasm.' Knight is similarly left clinging precariously to the last outlying knot of herbage as Mannion clutches madly at the wet sea-weed. But Hardy uses his scene as an opportunity to indulge in philosophical speculations rather than as a simple melodramatic climax. Collins's aim is simply to generate excitement and stimulate a state of suspense in his readers, and in this respect is Hardy's superior. For a discussion of Hardy's debt to Collins, see F.B. Pinion, *Thomas Hardy: Art and Thought* (London: Macmillan, 1977), pp. 1-9.

by a rock which juts out 'like a tooth' above which is located 'the very nose of the cliff'. Balancing with Knight, we expect to stare into a figurative pair of rocky optics, but far from permitting this massive face to see and be seen, Hardy presents a claustrophobic reality: the 'petrified eye' of a tiny trilobite. 'The inanimate world baits the mind of man' as the extinct, yet (imagined-)functional eyes lure the scientist's curiosity, mesmerize the human consciousness, and tease him out of thought:

Opposite Knight's eye was an embedded fossil, standing forth in low relief from the rock. It was a creature with eyes. The eyes, dead and turned to stone, were even now regarding him. (*PBE*, Ch. 22)⁵³

This particular episode is aggressively self-referential, as is the work as a whole.

These minutes of intense contemplation create a wrinkle in time, and, as one of those 'pauses in moments of suspense', distort the space/time continuum and generate what Proust would have called 'a fragment of time in the pure state'.⁵⁴ Possessing 'a mind with sight' ('The House of Silence', *CP*, 413), Knight combines the roles of magic-lantern and observer, centres his inner visions, and witnesses the disturbances caused by the coincident projection of each scene in the series. In the process, his omniscient perspective approximates and challenges the authority of Hardy himself:

His mind found time to take in, by a momentary sweep, the varied scenes that had had their day between this creature's epoch and his own... Time closed up like a fan before him... He saw himself at one extremity of the years, face to face with the beginning and all the intermediate centuries simultaneously. (*PBE*, Ch. 22)

This awesome view is an anticipatory clip of the ambitious mental project Hardy was to execute in *The Dynasts*, where, like Knight, he subjectively masters the dimensions. 'Vision's necromancy'⁵⁵ exposes 'Space and Time' as 'A Fancy!' (*D*, 3.I.iii) and the Spirits announce their intentions:

⁵³ This is remarkably close to Proust's description of 'the inner book of unknown symbols (symbols carved in relief they might have been, which my attention, as it explored my consciousness, groped for... like a diver exploring the ocean-bed)' (*Remembrance of Things Past*, III, 913). See Peter Clough, 'Hardy's Trilobite', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, IV:2 (May 1988), 29-31; J.O. Bailey, 'Hardy's "Imbedded Fossil"', *Studies in Philology*, 42 (July 1945), 663-74, for an account of Hardy's allusions to science.

⁵⁴ Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, III, 905.

⁵⁵ For a more detailed consideration of the 'magic' of the lantern/projector, see the chapter on *JO* and the appendix. See Lawrence Jay Deamer, 'Space, Time, and Coincidence in Hardy', *Studies in the Novel*, 24:2 (Summer 1992), 154-72, for a discussion of reality,

We'll close up Time, as a bird its van,
 We'll traverse Space, as spirits can,
 Link pulses severed by leagues and years,
 Bring cradles into touch with biers. (D, 1, Fore Scene)

During his own 'Bad Five Minutes in the Alps' (1872), Stephen relates how his 'mind felt the discordant jar between the past and the present'⁵⁶ when he is left hanging from a mountain-face. Henry and Stephen find the temporal disjunctions disorienting, and the latter decides to 'give [him]self up...to the train of thought that had been suggested, and like a magician in the wilderness, summon up the ghosts of the dead to reveal their true meaning'.⁵⁷ Moreover, the 'shifting visions'⁵⁸ decompose the observer into a dissociated 'double character'; like Knight, 'I was at once the actor and spectator of a terrible drama - the last moments...of a human being under irrevocable sentence of death'.⁵⁹

The problem of recapturing Time remained topical. Proust said that his temporal analyses (looking at a human face) 'offered me as it were all the successive images ...which separated the past from the present' and 'showed me the relationship...[I]t was like an old-fashioned peep-show...of the years, the vision not of a moment but of a person situated in the distorted perspective of Time'.⁶⁰ The geological time-scale opened up by Lyells' *Principles of Geology* (1830-3) had obviously passed into Hardy's consciousness and combined with his reading of Darwin's own mental struggle with temporal and geological vastness in Chapter IX of *The Origin of Species* (1859).⁶¹ His

perception and coincidence in *PBE* and *MC* in particular.

⁵⁶ Leslie Stephen, 'A Bad Five Minutes in the Alps', *Fraser's Magazine*, VI, n.s. (July 1872), 545-61 (p. 546).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 553.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 548. Harold Orel's 'The Literary Friendships of Thomas Hardy', *English Literature in Transition*, 24:3 (1981), 131-45, traces Hardy's friendship with Stephen, among others.

⁶⁰ Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, III, 965. Hardy's easy sweeps between time-scales, his leaning toward Darwinian teaching, and his acceptance of slow, evolutionary change through time, stood in opposition to those who believed in a fixed, ideal, divinely guided universe such as Richard Owen. Owen's *Hunterian Lectures of 1837* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), was followed in 1844 by Robert Chambers's then anonymous *Vestiges of Creation* (reissued Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), intro. James Secord. See A.J. Diamond, *The Politics of Evolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Philip Reid Sloan's introduction to Owen's *Lectures*; Nicolaas A. Rupke, 'Richard Owen's Vertebrate Archetype', *Isis*, 84 (1993), 321-51, and *Richard Owen: Victorian Naturalist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

⁶¹ It is also possible that Hardy was acquainted with Rossetti's addressing of this topical issue in 'The Sea-Limits' which was rather appositely entitled 'From the Cliffs: Noon' in 1850 when it originally appeared in *The Germ*. The entire poem parallels many of Hardy's concerns at this point in his narrative, but the most apposite focus is on time, sight and mystery as imaged in the sea. The opening commands the reader to

Consider the sea's listless chime:
 Time's self it is, made audible...
 Secret continuance sublime
 Is the sea's end: our sight may pass
 No furlong further. Since time was,
 This sound hath told the lapse of time. (lines 1-2, 4-7)

Moreover, the sea-sound has 'The mournfulness of ancient life' (line 9) and constitutes one of 'Those voices of twin solitudes' (line 17) - the other inhabiting 'the woods' - which 'have one sound alike to thee' (line 18). In Knight's experience, too, 'nature had then two voices', that of the wind and the moan of the sea. And just as Knight is brought to a state of transcendent vision by looking into the tiny trilobite, so the listener of 'The Sea-Limit' is brought to new aural heights by listening to a little shell from the beach. In both cases, the eye, for

reflection on what McPhee has more recently called 'deep time'⁶² is assimilated with the age's idiosyncratic terror⁶³ of time standing still, pausing, and ceasing to function, and in 1885 Hardy noted the following from a review on Henri Amiel:

To look on our own time from the point (of view) of universal history, on history from the point of view of geological periods, on geology from the point of view of astronomy - this is to enfranchise thought. (*LN*, I, 1340)⁶⁴

Liberated but dissociated, Knight stands back, watches himself at both ends of space and time, and experiences the Alpha and Omega of existence.⁶⁵

Knight's visual experience enlarges the common belief that, when on the verge of death, one's life flashes before one's eyes in a stream of images, and Hardy's slide-show may owe as much to geological science as to imaginative writing. The petrified victim of the 'Bad Five Minutes' remarks how 'it is often said that persons in similar situations have seen their whole past existence pass quickly before them', but, Stephen recounts, 'no such vision of the past remains engraved upon my memory',⁶⁶ a telling verb. It is feasible that Stephen and Hardy both delved into an even earlier source, De Quincey, in *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821), recounting how his mother, saved from drowning, 'saw in a moment her whole life, clotted in its forgotten incidents, arranged before her as in a mirror, not successively, but simultaneously'.⁶⁷ De Quincey understood the brain as 'a mighty palimpsest' upon which eternal 'layers of ideas, images, feelings' accumulated

Hardy, and the ear, for Rossetti, echo 'The same desire and mystery' (line 24). The sea, and its empty shells and fossils (microcosms of the ocean), expands perception outward to infinity and ultimate mystery: the 'end' is only that of human vision; the real 'end' is 'continuance' into the horizon.

⁶² John McPhee, *Basin and Range* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1980), elaborated by Stephen Jay Gould in *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), and by Kevin Padian, "A Daughter of the Soil": Themes of Deep Time and Evolution in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XIII: 3 (Oct 1997), 65-81: 'The concept of "deep time" recognizes that the ages of the Earth and the Universe must exceed any scales of human memory or history by many orders of magnitude' (p. 66). Interestingly enough, Darwin said that Lyell's three-volume work was responsible for his own sense of time, and 'it is precisely this broad expanse of time, time beyond human comprehension or measure...that provides the dimension necessary for Darwin's processes to realize their potential effects' (ib.).

⁶³ Hardy's use of 'petrified' includes both paralysis and terror.

⁶⁴ Blanche Leppington, 'Amiel's Journal', *Contemporary Review*, XLVII (March 1885), 339. See also Carol R. Andersen, 'Time, Space, and Perspective in Thomas Hardy', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 9 (1954), 192-208: 'we must take all the ordinary elements of the novel (landscape, characters, plot) and accept them as metaphorical equivalents of the theme' (p. 195).

⁶⁵ Patricia Ingham, 'Hardy and *The Wonders of Geology*', *Review of English Studies*, 31 (1980), 59-64, explores the extent to which Hardy literally lifted information for the paleontological sweep of Ch. 22 from his copy of the sixth edition of Gideon Mantell's *The Wonders of Geology* (1848).

⁶⁶ Stephen, 'A Bad Five Minutes in the Alps', p. 548.

⁶⁷ Thomas De Quincey, 'Confessions of an English Opium-Eater', in *The Collected Writings*, XIII, 346-7. See also Dante Gabriel Rossetti's sonnet, 'The Soul's Sphere', no. LXII in *The House of Life* series. The poet alludes to 'the soul's sphere of infinite images' and concludes with a reference to

...that last
Wild pageant of the accumulated past
That clangs and flashes for a drowning man.

'softly as light'. Moreover, Knight's incredible calmness - for which Hardy has been adversely criticized - is exonerated by the mind's innate desire for logic and order, these qualities disallowing its 'ultimate repose to be troubled in the retrospect from other great convulsions'.⁶⁸

Hardy's familiarity with this conception is witnessed in his grudging concession that 'the human mind is a sort of palimpsest, I suppose',⁶⁹ but it is a far cry from De Quincey's enthusiastic acceptance and there are reservations and inconsistencies elsewhere. Whereas De Quincey describes personally-significant impressions, Knight's are territorial and anterior to him as an individual; he sees the planet's life rather than his own, yet the atavistic image, in its general pertinence to Hardy's writing, foresees its reflection in 'Moments of Vision' (CP, 352). There Hardy confronts 'that strange mirror' which 'May catch his last thoughts, whole life foul or fair,/Glassing it - where?' Both De Quincey's and Hardy's 'mirrors' can collate our dying thoughts, but whereas De Quincey seems persuaded by the palimpsest notion, Hardy stays unconvinced and his concluding question implies the existence of a temporal and spatial location for these "reflections". Although an answer is as evasive as the inquiry posed, Hardy suggests that these crystallized impressions can be fixed and 'arranged' in a single moment of vision and 'glassed' in other eyes: Hardy's *Pair of Blue Eyes*, Elfride's and the trilobite's.

The novel's *raison d'être* depends on 'arranged' visual replications which are comprehended as a sort of *déjà vu*, Elfride's assumption, "'You are familiar, of course, as everybody is, with those strange sensations we sometimes have, that the moment has been in duplicate, or will be'" (PBE, Ch. 18), registering the text's composite effect.⁷⁰ Events heightened through repetition acquire an uncomfortable sensationalism which forces the reader to assess corresponding scenes in conjunction, thereby intensifying our experience of each as the layered episodes are reproduced in the self-imploded images which are 'folded/behind/underneath' or 'overlapped'. And though 'Time, with its restless scene on scene' ('Every Artemisia', CP, 692), dictates the provisional parameters, it is the

⁶⁸ De Quincey, 'Confessions of an English Opium-Eater', XIII, 346-7.

⁶⁹ William Archer, *Real Conversations* (London: Heinemann, 1904), p. 32.

⁷⁰ See Martin Heusser, 'Déjà Vu with a Difference: Repetition and the Tragic in Thomas Hardy's Novels', in *Repetition*, ed. Andreas Fischer (Tübingen: Narr, 1994), pp. 171-87.

mind-projector, collaborating with memory and vision, which selects, cuts and manipulates the viewpoint in order to express the shifting spatial and temporal perspectives. Time may be transparent, but there is no fluid transition between, or dissolving in and out of, the past and present. Instead, Knight, conscious of the strata comprising this 'closed up...fan', sees separate segments of time within the same dimension. Image and text are analogous:

A book is itself a kind of fan; Hardy's insistence on the structure of *A Pair of Blue Eyes* closes up the book, folding pages over each other and creating the awkward, intense juxtapositions common in his narratives.⁷¹

In working against a linear chronology, by breaking up the narrative into contrived sections, Hardy risks formally fragmenting the novel. The fan metaphor precludes smooth shifts, even while it allows both Knight and the reader to discern different phases concurrently yet remain aware of their separateness. Working in the margin where paradoxes occur, Hardy moves toward division and separation even while pushing the metaphor toward transparency and simultaneity of vision, but the strategy is not a complete success and accounts for much of the work's stylistic awkwardness.

The 'images' may have 'passed before Knight's inner eye in less than half a minute', but his learning is proportionally concentrated. Enlivened by its silent visual testimony on the human condition, the isopod discloses a pessimistic correspondence between Prehistoric and Victorian - 'the lifetime scenes of the fossil confronting him were a present and modern condition of things' - and the text's own abstract concerns. Once Knight is made privy to the perceptions available to Hardy who creates a spiral of worlds within worlds⁷² and to the knowledge accompanying such a survey, the vision explodes and the introduction of thousands of tiny lenses, rain droplets, coerces Knight into a 'new way of thinking' until an 'entirely new order of things could be observed'. At this point Knight stops, looks around, takes scientific stock of his position, and finds his perceptions 'magnified' by his situation at the eye of a geographical telescope:

⁷¹ Prentiss, 'Compilation and Design in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', p. 66.

⁷² See *PBE*, Ch 13, for the visual spiral of aquarium in Knight's room in the street in London, each world literally needing a different light to illuminate it.

From the fact that the cliff formed the inner face of the segment of a narrow cylinder...which enclosed the bay to the extent of nearly a semi-circle he could see the vertical face circling round on each side of him. (*PBE*, Ch. 22)

By reworking this optically-shaped terrain in *Two on a Tower*, Hardy duplicates the figure and joins the telescopes to form a pair of binoculars.⁷³ The 'gently concave' (*TT*, Ch. 2) topography of Welland, imitated in a sky imaginatively seen as 'the concavity of a dome whose base extends from horizon to horizon of our earth' (*TT*, Ch. 4), makes a powerful lens illuminated by the 'glance' of 'the great eye of the sun' (*TT*, Ch. 18).

Two on a Tower reconsiders the problem of knowledge and massive visions through the astronomer, Swithen St Cleeve, who, like Knight, suffers an expansion of his mental aptitude which radically alters his perception of reality. And if it is true that the act of observation changes the thing observed, it is even more true that it changes the observer. Emotion is central to the transforming process, and through Knight Hardy indulges one of his principal doctrines:

We colour according to our moods the objects we survey. The sea would have been a deep neutral blue had happier auspices attended the gazer: it was now no other than distinctly black to his vision...[A] black sea - his funeral pall. (*PBE*, Ch. 22)⁷⁴

This visual echo of the prefatory 'region of dream and mystery' with its 'pall-like sea' sweeps the fringes of the ultimate 'mystery' and reality because its significance is rooted in the observing consciousness: 'the poetry of a scene varies with the minds of the perceivers. Indeed, it does not lie in the scene at all' (*EL*, p. 66; Aug 1865), a turn of phrase which picks up on Wordsworth's exposition of 1816:

objects...derive their influence not from what they are actually in themselves, but from such as are bestowed upon them by the minds of those who are conversant with or affected by those objects.⁷⁵

⁷³ Hardy may have been familiar with Alexander Bain's discussion of 'Single Vision with Two Eyes. Binocular Vision', in *The Senses and the Intellect* (1855; London: Longmans, Green & Co., 4th edn., 1894), pp. 241-6.

⁷⁴ Cp. 'At Beeny. The Cliff: green towards the land, blue-black towards the sea...Seaward, a dark grey ocean beneath a pale green sky, upon which lie branches of red cloud' (*PNB*, p. 11; Aug 1872).

⁷⁵ *Letters of Dorothy and William Wordsworth: The Middle Years*, ed. E. de Selincourt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), II, 705. Cp. John Keble, *Lectures on Poetry* (1832-41), trans. E.K. Francis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912): poetry 'paints all things in the hues which the mind itself desires' (I, 22).

Two years later Hazlitt noted, 'it is the perfect coincidence of the image and the words with the feelings we have...that gives an instant "satisfaction to the thought"'.⁷⁶

Hardy's experimentation with the theory of affective perception⁷⁷ shows how phenomenal integrity is endangered by the revisions of an emotional eye: feelings alter and signify objects of sense. For those writing in the eighteenth century, the affective translation of things was pleaded to justify the use of figurative language, Coleridge addressing the visually impressive and emotionally equivalent potential of colour:

It is a well-known fact, that bright colours in motion both make and leave the strongest impressions on the eye. Nothing is more likely too, than that a vivid image or visual spectrum, thus originated, may become the link of association in recalling the feelings and images that had accompanied the original impression.⁷⁸

For those of the nineteenth century, the topic itself, occupying a central position in poetic theory, was expressed through analogy. Picking up the ubiquitous reflective metaphor in 1833, Fox explained how the poet 'delineates the whole external world from its reflected imagery in the mirror of human feeling and thought'.⁷⁹ Mill, reworking the lantern image, declared that feelings projected a coloured light on sense- objects: externals were 'arranged in the colours and seen through the medium of the imagination set in action by the feelings'.⁸⁰ Distilled in an impassioned imagination, objects are re-realized. Hardy's literary aesthetic proposes that the existence of outer realities is confined to the state of the percipient, but, in a characteristic inconsistency, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* also admits the alternative symbolist position: 'Nature seems to have moods in other than a poetical sense' (*PBE*, Ch. 22). After Brunetiere, the physical world possesses an autonomous affective ontology; it is a feeling or condition regardless and independent of any extrinsic

⁷⁶ William Hazlitt, 'On Poetry in General' (1818), in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P.P. Howe, 21 vols (London and Toronto: Dent, 1930-34), V, 1-18 (p. 7).

⁷⁷ See the chapter on *TD* which is devoted to this angle.

⁷⁸ Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, VII (ii), Ch. XXII, p. 136. Coleridge's quarrel is with the excessive discrepancy of thought and equivalent image. If daffodils can 'flash upon that inward eye, / Which is the bliss of solitude', then 'in what words shall we describe the joy of retrospection, when the images and virtuous actions of a whole well-spent life pass before that conscience which is indeed the inward eye: which is indeed "the bliss of solitude"?' (ib.). Hardy subverts the blissful, Romantic view of subjective reflection. Knight's 'inward eye' occasions an agony of solipsism for his conduct is hardly 'virtuous'.

⁷⁹ W.J. Fox, *Monthly Repository*, Second Series, VII (1833), p. 33.

⁸⁰ J.S. Mill, 'What is Poetry?' (1833) in *Early Essays by John Stuart Mill*, ed. J.W.M. Gibbs (London: Bell, 1897), pp. 201-17 (p. 207).

emotions, and it is this self-sufficient, objective reality which, for Hardy, is the absolute in inscrutability.

Hardy's visualization of this inner truth subverts received prescriptions regarding realism and realistic fictions which purport to have mastered phenomena by defining, cataloguing and naming them. His method side-steps precision and approaches through suggestion and anti-definition: he implies what a thing is not. No wonder, then, that 'the world was to some extent turned upside down for Knight' (*PBE*, Ch. 22) and, thus inverted, he goes to take 'the prize', but the reader, expecting inclusion in this ultimate revelation, is left bitterly disappointed:

Knight gave up thoughts of life entirely, and turned to contemplate the dark Valley and the unknown future beyond. Into the shadowy depths of these speculations we will not follow him. Let it suffice to state what ensued. (*PBE*, Ch. 22)

This somewhat abstruse investigation of death was recognized at the time as possessing 'a whimsicality of treatment which is strange, but neither jarring nor irrelevant', as fearlessly confronting 'the terrible irony of the fact of the rigid and impenetrable veil which shuts suddenly like a portcullis behind the retreating figure'.⁸¹ Hardy may well have borrowed the idea from the 'Sorrows of Teufelsdröckh' for whom

Life had become wholly a dark labyrinth...Foolish were it in us to attempt following him...Hopeless is the obscurity, unspeakable the confusion...Let him sink out of sight...The whole, too, imparted emblematically, in dim multifarious tokens.⁸²

Pulling back from the text, Hardy seems to relinquish control, abnegate perceptual authority, and reduce himself to the same ignorant but interested position occupied by the reader; in fact, the gesture, as with Carlyle, induces a deliberate paradox. On the one hand, Hardy proposes that the grand discourse which will demystify the Mystery is

⁸¹ Survey in the *British Quarterly Review*, LXXIII (1881), 342-60; rpt. *Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage*, ed. R.G. Cox (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), pp. 78-94 (p. 87). Cp. Stephen's, 'A Bad Five Minutes in the Alps', which uses a similar cliff-hanger to make brief historical excursions of various philosophical approaches to life and death. For more recent related articles, see Paul McClure's 'Note on the Cliff Scene in Hardy's *A Pair of Blue Eyes*', *Durham University Journal*, LXXXIII:1 n.s. LII:1 (Jan 1991), 53, which explains how the episode 'dramatises and focuses the truth of death in a powerful metaphor'; and Eric Christen's 'Hardy in Switzerland 15 June - 4 July 1897', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XI:2 (May 1995), 65-86. Christen considers the influence of this journey on Hardy. There is also specific reference to Stephen and the Alps, and to Stephen and Hardy.

⁸² Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus: The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh* (1832; London: Chapman & Hall, 1870), Bk. II. Ch. VI.

neither accessible to the human mind nor open to expression; it is imageless. Trying to fathom out the unfathomable is futile for

the thing in itself [is] still...beyond our knowledge...The Scheme of Things is, indeed incomprehensible; and there I suppose we must leave it - perhaps for the best. Knowledge might be terrible. (*LY*, p. 9, July 1892; p. 218, Dec 1920)⁸³

On the other hand, the power of suggestion pertaining to these 'shadowy depths' encourages greater imaginative penetration of Knight's mental state than any intrusive objective analysis, but whereas Stephen's similar 'search into the unknowable' declares that 'the veil which covers that mystery is one which depends upon the constitution of the human mind, and is not drawn back as its faculties grow',⁸⁴ Novalis claims that the Answers *are* the human mind:

We dream of voyages through the universe; but is not the universe in us? We do not know the depths of our spirits. Into the interior leads the mysterious road. In us or nowhere is the infinite with its world, past and future. The exterior world is a shadow world.⁸⁵

Knight travels this 'mysterious road' and communes with the infinite in all its contingent possibilities, but the journey destroys his previous blissful ignorance. Hardy's last poem, appropriately entitled 'He Resolves to Say No More' (*CP*, 919), pleads for the rest to be kept 'unknown':

And if my vision range beyond
The blinkered sight of souls in bond,
- By truth made free -
I'll let all be,
And show to no man what I see.

Man may embody truth but he can never fully comprehend it. Abandoned to ponder the great enigma alone, Knight is forced to reassess his moral and philosophical approach to life and death. The correct conclusion will transfer his point of view from the confines of

⁸³ See Joseph Melia, 'Anti-Realism Untouched', *Mind*, 100 (July 1991), 341-2, who argues that it is possible for an anti-realist to hold that not all truths are knowable.

⁸⁴ Leslie Stephen, 'Dreams and Realities', in *An Agnostic's Apology, and Other Essays* (London: Smith & Elder, 1893; rpt. Bristol: Thoemmes, 1991), pp. 86-126 (pp. 93-4).

⁸⁵ Novalis, 'Fragments', *Transition*, 18 (Nov 1929), 75-8 (p. 75).

impartial intellectual objectivism to the expansive precincts of emotional subjectivism, and the experience teaches him to see ultimate salvation not in some esoteric Power but in prosaic Blue Eyes.

Knight's insight comes from his looking *'into* rather than *at* a pair of petrified eyes which sublimate the self-referentiality of *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. Given the novel's repetitive, imagistic framework, it is right that the title should have a comprehensive applicability and find its extinct equivalent buried between layers of (p)ages; *A Pair of Blue Eyes* is another relic, a text with an incipient geology. Only a few years before Hardy's birth, James Eights discovered an isopod that resembled a trilobite, and his scientific description of its 'elevated and prominent eyes' with their 'infinite facets' finds a literary correlative in Hardy's example 'standing forth in low relief'. But the most interesting correspondence is approached through Morrison, Eights's modern reviewer: 'What colour do you suppose the corrected fast eyes of trilobites were?' he asks. The answer predicts Hardy's own, for 'the living colour of turreted eyes long turned to stone' is 'distinctly visible to the naked eye: colour blue'.⁸⁶ Morrison insists that Eights's find was 'widely known for its bright blue eyes' and the opportunity to draw a parallel inference is irresistible. There is no unequivocal evidence in Hardy's notes to indicate acquaintance with the work of Eights or other contemporary marine biologists, but it was the sort of topic about which Hardy kept himself well-informed.

It seems that Knight's ability to transcend time through a faded pair of blue eyes is synonymous with Elfride's; she, too, can see into *her* beholder's 'past, present and future' simultaneously (*PBE*, Ch. 17), and we repeat the process by looking *'into* rather than *at* *A Pair of Blue Eyes* to read in turn the heroine's 'history' (*PBE*, Ch. 1). Her 'gazing' into the far recesses of time while still 'clinging' to the original stimulus is even repeated at a linguistic level by the fossil 'regarding' Knight as he 'clung' physically and optically to the cliff-face. And because such extensive visions 'Bring cradles into touch with biers' (*D*, 1, Fore Scene), these prehistoric 'eyes, long dead and turned to stone', see

⁸⁶ Philip Morrison, 'Old Blue Eyes', *Scientific American* (Feb 1994), 118-20. A review of the new edition of Riccardo Levi-Setti's *Trilobites*. Morrison praises Levi-Setti's hypothesis regarding the physics of the trilobite's composite eye. I am indebted to the information provided by William and Anne Harmon, 'Another Pair of Blue Eyes', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XI:2 (May 1995), 64.

that future date when the owner of the novel's eponymous optics has 'herself gone down into silence like her ancestors, and shut her bright blue eyes for ever' (*PBE*, Ch. 40). We take on the responsibility for this final act by closing the cover/lids of *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. Book and eyes are, metaphorically and formally, synonymous.⁸⁷

A Pair of Blue Eyes is a series of interconnected, repeated singular events which relies for its artistic effect on optical claustrophobia. The abstract is materialized via homogeneous visual symbols which arrest, 'petrify', the advance of the story-line and illustrate that quality which Pater recognized in Giorgione's work:

It presents us with a kind of profoundly significant and animated instants, a mere gesture, a look... - some brief and wholly concrete moments - into which...all the motives, all the interest and effects of long history have condensed themselves, and which seem to absorb past and future in an intense consciousness of the present.⁸⁸

As spectators of these 'exquisite pauses in time' in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, we see 'some consummate extract or quintessence of life'. Pater saw the ability to condense and typify the general continuity of life into a single static moment as 'part of the highest sort of dramatic poetry';⁸⁹ Patmore, no doubt alluding to the figurative concentration of *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, applauded it as 'not a conception for prose' and claimed that its 'unequalled beauty and power' would have been assured immortality 'by the form of verse' (*EL*, p. 138; March 1875); Hardy, aware of this poetical vein, distinguished *A Pair of Blue Eyes* from his earlier work by its 'visionary nature' (*EL*, p. 96; March 1870).⁹⁰ In this poetic prose, visual and verbal patterning evolve concurrently, actions and characters are portrayed as enigmatic and evasive, and each picture, though unique in itself, stands as yet another interpretation of previous images. In its almost perfect integration of narrative and metaphor, in its daring experimentation with the traditional form of realistic

⁸⁷ But whereas *PBE* and *Elfrida* are forever in process, forever indeterminate, the pair of petrified blue eyes is essentially fixed and dead.

⁸⁸ Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (1873; London: Macmillan, 1922), p. 150.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Hardy clearly demonstrates Wordsworth's conviction that 'the language of Prose may yet be well adapted to Poetry; and...a large proportion of the language of every good poem can in no respect differ from that of good Prose...[T]here neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of Prose and metrical composition' ('Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*' (1805), in *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. Michael Mason (London and New York: Longman, 1992), pp. 55-87; Appendix, pp. 87-93 (pp. 68-9). Hardy's own thoughts on the invariability of such a contradistinction are shown in his declaration that '*Ars est celare artem*'. His species of careless or living style 'is, of course, simply a carrying into prose the knowledge I have acquired in poetry' (*EL*, p. 138; March 1875).

fiction, and as the inaugural 'visible essence' (*EL*, p. 232; March 1886), *A Pair of Blue Eyes* is a remarkable achievement.

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III

'THE MORAL RETINA':¹

LEARNING FROM PERCEPTUAL AMBIGUITIES IN *FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD* (1874)

We must ask in what sense and how far the value of this artistic revelation may be dependent upon the moral qualities of the seer?²

In making even horizontal and clear inspections we colour and mould according to the wants within us whatever our eyes bring in. (*FMC*, II)

Far from the Madding Crowd reaches back to earlier novels while also introducing strategies which anticipate Hardy's more ambitious works. Though grounded in the bucolic like *Under the Greenwood Tree*, it amalgamates the 'absurdities...incongruities and suddenly sensational incidents'³ that preoccupy *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, and is studded with 'miniature dramas' or 'set pieces'⁴ which synthesize the realistic and subjective techniques of its predecessors. In Hutton's estimation, 'a book like this is...the nearest equivalent to actual experience,⁵ but the sheer persuasiveness of the pictures confused the critics: 'Are they a faithful rendering of real events...or are they not imaginary creations with possibly some small groundwork of reality?'⁶ Both appreciate the imaginative transformation of matter-of-fact actualities, and, despite reservations over verisimilitude, the latter does address the instructive value of the representation: 'His sketches are imaginative, drawn from the inside, and highly finished. They show power also of probing and analysing the deeper shades of character.'⁷ As James was to explain, 'a psychological reason' makes for 'an object adorably pictorial'.⁸

By 1874, Hardy's competence in executing convincing psychological portraits was obvious. Though metaphorically indeterminate, the tableaux in *Far from the Madding Crowd* paint a familiar and credible background for the more unusual, abstract

¹ John Ruskin, *The Complete Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: George Allen, 1903-12), IV, 36. Hereafter cited parenthetically in text as *Works*.

² Leslie Stephen, 'The Moral Element in Literature', *Cornhill*, XLIII (1881), 34-50 (p. 39). See *LN*, I, 1217.

³ Anon., *The Observer* (Jan 3, 1875); rpt. *Thomas Hardy: Critical Assessments*, ed. Graham Clarke, 4 vols (East Sussex: Helm Information Ltd, 1993), I, 70-2 (I, 70). Hereafter cited as *TH:CA*.

⁴ Irving Howe, *Thomas Hardy* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 57.

⁵ R.H. Hutton, review in the *Spectator* (Dec 19, 1874), 1597-9; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 75-9 (I, 75).

⁶ Anon., *Saturday Review*, XXXIX (Jan 9, 1875), 57-8; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 95-100 (I, 98).

⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 95.

⁸ Henry James, *Partial Portraits* (London: Macmillan, 1888), p. 402.

episodes, and the idyllic romance of Oak and Bathsheba develops 'in the interstices of a mass of hard prosaic reality' (*FMC*, LVI). The separation of 'prosaic reality' from exceptional ideality is the ethical dilemma posed by the text and confronted by the inhabitants of this imperfect world.⁹ Characters must decide how to process observed data, and assess the extent to which information thus gathered can be trusted by looking at reality with moral eye.¹⁰ For ocular proof is fallible, and Hume, interrogating the trustworthiness of the perceptual faculty, emphasized

the imperfection and fallaciousness of our [visual] organs, on numberless occasions...[T]he senses alone are not implicitly to be depended on; but that we must correct their evidence by reason...in order to render them, within their sphere, the proper *criteria* of truth and falsehood.¹¹

Far from the Madding Crowd investigates this corrective process by bringing (physical) looking and (subjective) perceiving into close proximity, and exploring what Stephen identified as 'the distortions due to mental perspective when the objects of vision are too close to our eyes'.¹²

The history of Bathsheba's moral education and perceptual remodification readjusts the orthodox treatment of literary heroines. Hardy's hard-hitting response to feminine realism¹³ explodes contemporary support for the traditionally demure,

⁹ See Marjorie Garson, *Hardy's Fables of Integrity: Woman, Body, Text* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991): 'In the moral structure of this novel, psychological and moral unity involves submission to the realities of a fallen world' (p. 29). For discussions of the Fall see Perry Meisel, *Thomas Hardy: The Return of the Repressed* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 46; Ian Gregor, *The Great Web: The Form of Hardy's Major Fiction* (London: Faber & Faber, 1974), p. 59; Virginia R. Hyman, *Ethical Perspective in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1975); George Wotton, *Thomas Hardy: Towards a Materialist Criticism* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan; Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble, 1985), p. 135. Hardy may have been reading *Paradise Lost* while writing *Far from the Madding Crowd*. For Hardy and Milton see LN, I, 1144n.

¹⁰ Gregor's belief that this ethical dimension is something 'we feel was remote from Hardy's purpose' (*The Great Web*, p. 50) begs qualification. It is difficult to accept that Hardy was oblivious of this position given his reading at the time. Moreover, the exaltation of realistic practicality which informs the novel's principal moral idea is one reason why many found the work suggestive of Eliot.

¹¹ David Hume, *Hume's Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1748, 1751), ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), p. 151.

¹² Leslie Stephen, 'Newman's Theory of Belief', in *An Agnostic's Apology, and Other Essays* (London, Smith & Elder, 1893; rpt. Bristol: Thoemmes, 1991), pp. 168-241 (p. 168).

¹³ Bathsheba has distinct, masculine traits: she runs the farm, rides cross-saddle, and takes the lead in relationships. She does worry about appearing 'mannish' and Liddy discusses how this comes across in her strength of character. See Daniel R. Schwarz, 'The Early Development of *Far from the Madding Crowd*', *Texas Studies in Language and Literature*, 9 (1968), 415-28. Rosemarie Morgan's *Cancelled Words: Rediscovering Thomas Hardy* (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1992), espec. pp. 124-8, shows how the alterations Hardy made from the MS, to its serialization in the *Cornhill* reduces Bathsheba's anger and wilfulness to make her more tractable and acceptably feminine. See also Judith Bryant Wittenberg, 'Angles of Vision and Questions of Gender in *Far from the Madding Crowd*', *Centennial Review*, 30:1 (Winter 1986), 25-40; Marilyn French, *Beyond Power: On Women, Men and Morals* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1985); Linda Shires, 'Narrative, Gender, and Power in *Far from the Madding Crowd*', *Novel*, 24:2 (Winter 1991), 162-77. Shires concludes that the novel feeds 'the growing uncertainty at the end of the nineteenth century: What is woman?' See also Simon Gaskell's excellent '*Far from the Madding Crowd* Revisited', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, X:2 (May 1994), 38-50. Samir Elbarbary, 'The Male Bias of Language and Gender Hierarchy: Hardy's Bathsheba Everdene and His Vision of Feminine Reality Reconsidered', *Cahiers Victorians et Edouardiens*, 41 (April 1995), 59-79, studies women's language in Hardy's novels, beginning with Bathsheba's statement that it is 'difficult for a woman to express her feelings in language which is chiefly made by men to express theirs'. Bathsheba overcomes these difficulties and rejects the gender hierarchy of language. Laura Green, '"Strange [in]difference of sex":

unspoiled feminine ideal, and Stubbs sees Hardy forwarding a 'potentially more disturbing version of woman than anything envisaged by contemporary political feminists'.¹⁴ Eliot's Mrs Poyser held that women were made foolish to make men appear more noble,¹⁵ but Hardy creates irresolute males to match his fallible, duplicitous, lascivious and over-bearing females. As Steel maintains:

Hardy's man must recognize woman as equally human, humanly good and humanly flawed, or remain demon to her witch, and woman struggles to define herself within constraints imposed on her by man's projection.¹⁶

As 'real' women, handicapped with a 'prescriptive [moral] infirmity' (*FMC*, I),¹⁷ are unfit to function as 'the conscience of men',¹⁸ Hardy charges his heroes with the moral responsibility, and Bathsheba's instruction is supervised by Oak who is, as Williams notes, 'morally stronger and better than most people'.¹⁹ Such radical revisions, far removed from any received method which conceives women as 'moral forces, centripetal tendencies providentially adapted to balance the centrifugal tendencies of men',²⁰ inject into Victorian fictional realism a new moral perspective.²¹

Thomas Hardy, the Victorian Man of Letters, and the Temptation of Androgyny', *Victorian Studies*, 38 (1995), 523-49, contends that Hardy's ambitious heroines (Elfrida, Bathsheba, Grace, and Sue) challenge the Victorian convention of the domesticated woman. Ellen Lew Sprechman, *Seeing Women as Men: Role Reversal in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Lanham and London: University Press of America, 1995), reveals the strength, independence and charisma of the women and the physical and/or mental weakness of the men. Sprechman asserts that Hardy clearly reverses the hero/heroine roles and thus showed his reading public that the traditional gender roles no longer held true. Women could, in fact, be the 'heroes' of literature and life.

¹⁴ Patricia Stubbs, *Women and Fiction: Feminism and the Novel 1880-1920* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 54.

¹⁵ George Eliot, *Adam Bede* (1859), ed. Stephen Gill (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), VI, 53: "I'm not denyin' the women are foolish: God Almighty made 'em to match the men... That's what a man wants in a wife, mostly: he wants to make sure o' one fool as 'll tell him he's wise." There seem to be several important reworkings of this character in *FMC*. Like Oak, there was no weakness of which she was less tolerant than feminine vanity; all, even the farm dogs, are still by the freezing arctic ray of Mrs Poyser's glance' (I, 6); in the matter of morals, eyes and beauty, 'it is generally a feminine eye that first detects the moral deficiencies hidden under the "dear deceit" of beauty: so it is not surprising that Mrs Poyser, with her keenness and abundant opportunity for observation, should have formed a tolerably fir estimate of what might be expected from Hetty' (I, 15). The same can be said of Oak's sagacious regard of Bathsheba. This moral pattern, especially where it concerned marriage partners and masculine expectations of women, was readdressed in D.H. Lawrence's 'Give Her a Pattern', in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. E.D. McDonald, 2 vols (New York: Viking, 1936; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1961), II, 535-8: 'Modern women isn't really a fool. But modern man is... Because he absolutely doesn't know what he wants her to be... The women aren't fools. They have their own logic, even if it's not the masculine sort. Women have the logic of emotion, men have the logic of reason... Whereas men are fools' (537).

¹⁶ Gayla R. Steel, *Sexual Tyranny in Wessex: Hardy's Witches and Demons of Folklore* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), p. 3.

¹⁷ This crucial comment was absent from the original MS and added later. See Simon Gatrell, 'Hardy the Creator: *Far from the Madding Crowd*', in *Critical Approaches to Thomas Hardy*, ed. Dale Kramer (London: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 74-98.

¹⁸ The epitome must surely be Austen's Fanny Price who constantly reminds the incorrigible Henry Crawford of the 'still small voice of conscience'. Through her consistency she lays claim to the title.

¹⁹ Merryyn Williams, 'The Hardy hero and his predicament', in *A Preface to Hardy* (London and New York: Longman, 1976; 2nd edn. 1993), pp. 87-100 (p. 90).

²⁰ Havelock Ellis, 'Thomas Hardy's Novels', *Westminster Review*, CXIX n.s. LXIII (1883), 334-64; rpt. *TH:CA*, III, 27-51 (III, 46).

²¹ It was this trend, this relocation of the moral centre, which marked Hardy as distinctly modern and which was later extended by Lawrence, most notably in *The Rainbow* (1915; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1949). Tom Brangwen's speculations are exposed by the narrator: 'The woman was the symbol for that further life which comprised religion and love and morality. The men placed in her hands their own conscience, they said to her "Be my conscience-keeper"... They depended on her for their stability' (Ch. 1.II).

The characters, each of whom 'represents, to a certain extent, a different facet of human perception and understanding',²² can be grouped according to their primary function as watcher or watched. Through her mirror, Bathsheba at first earns a right to both, but her final ability to evaluate herself objectively as a 'watched woman' (*FMC*, LI) and acknowledge the moral obligations of one upon whom 'many eyes were turned' (*FMC*, L)²³ succeeds a history of visual, masculine onslaught, a discipline which entails tortuous perceptual reconfiguration. Only when she is ready to accept responsibility for the governing moral perspective does the viewpoint and the reality it sees become fixed. The opening chapter prepares the ambivalent boundaries and though Hardy takes an active part in this inspection, much of the perspective is filtered through the judgmental staring of Oak, yet the final analysis belongs to neither and the onus falls on the reader. Having 'beheld the sight' of Bathsheba's approaching entourage, the voyeur-cum-spy,²⁴ 'casually glancing over the hedge', takes up a more amenable position as everything is 'brought to a standstill just beneath his eyes'. Immobile and static, the portrait painting of this 'water-colour in words'²⁵ begins. 'The picture was a delicate one' (*FMC*, I).²⁶

Bathsheba's graphic introduction visualizes Hardy's relationship to and position within his story. An absent presence, a 'spectatorial narrator',²⁷ he manages an ingenious association between Bathsheba and reader and the episode 'exploits this identification, actively taunting the reader about the nature of authorial self-erasure'.²⁸ Both look into a reflective medium, whether book or mirror,²⁹ and "read" various meanings. It can be placed alongside Hetty's self-adoration in her looking-glass where Eliot, conspicuously in

²² Penelope Vigar, *The Novels of Thomas Hardy: Illusion and Reality* (London: Athlone Press, 1974), p. 103. See J.B. Bullen, 'Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd*: Perception and Understanding', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, III:2 (May 1987), 38-61.

²³ Cp. Hetty who 'was quite used to the thought that people liked to look at her', many of the men going to church 'on purpose that [they] might see her' (*Adam Bede*, I. 9).

²⁴ Oak continues the tradition of Dewey, and passes it on to his successors: the lovers all contrive to spy on their beloveds, 'a motif that often emphasizes real or imagined distance between Hardy's lovers' (Ronald D. Morrison, 'Jude the Obscure and *The Well-Beloved*: Sibling Novels', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 22 (Winter 1996), 34-53 (p.42)).

²⁵ Hutton, *TH:CA*, I, 79.

²⁶ Such word-painting can be usefully compared to Dante Gabriel Rossetti's method in 'The Portrait', in *The Poetical Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, ed. William Rossetti (London: Ellis and Elvey, 1891). Each representation distorts the original, and both Hardy and Rossetti explore the resulting strangeness of perception and the concomitant conflict between appearance and reality. But whereas Oak visually creates a living 'Portrait' entitled 'Vanity', Rossetti poetically paints one of a remembered woman which is conscious of its self-deluding power: the painter/poet revives his beloved but knows it is not a truth. Yet in both, empirical facts do not constitute the whole "reality"; they are inextricably linked up with informing human consciousness as demonstrated through perception, memory and feeling. And Oak is later to recall this first 'portrait' when confronted again with the original.

²⁷ Judith Bryant Wittenberg, 'Early Hardy Novels and the Fictional Eye', *Novel*, 16 (Winter 1983), 151-64 (p. 152).

²⁸ Joe Fisher, *The Hidden Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1992), p. 50.

²⁹ Remembering that 'un roman est un miroir' (Albert J. Salvan, 'L'Essence du Realisme Francais', *Comparative Literature*, III:3 (1951), 222-33 (p. 232)).

the foreground, exposes intention and delivers the final verdict.³⁰ Hardy, on the other hand, leaves us in a state of frustrated moral ambivalence as objective contemplation moves through interpretation and arrives at an enigmatic, self-negating conclusion. Speculation distances the reader - 'What possessed her to indulge in such a performance in the sight of sparrows, blackbirds, and unperceived farmer who were alone its spectators nobody knows' - and aligns us with Oak's own puzzlement.

Though we sense Bathsheba's charm and access her mind as her history develops, we never approach that ultimate reason of her being. She is the first character in whom object and subject meet: she already knows her own worth. For Miller, her

charming vanity...brings into the opening the hidden intimacy of her relationship to herself...Bathsheba plays the role of both lover and loved, seer and seen...Gabriel has been stealing from her that sovereignty over herself she thought she has been enjoying in secrecy and security.³¹

Thus there resides a dangerous potential for violation in the watcher's reductive scrutiny: 'A cynical inference was irresistible by Gabriel Oak as he regarded the scene, generous though he fain would have been.' What, one wonders, would have made him 'generous'? Probably an assurance that her self-regard and self-definition require that 'men play a part', yet the author's dismissal of these surmises as mere 'conjecture' undermines his position and invites the reader's mistrust. Yet if he is trusted, there remains the unspoken moral challenge to the female audience: she is watching herself in the mirror.³² The

³⁰ For a full discussion of the moral/perceptual relationship between these episodes, see my 'Hardy and Eliot: The Eye of Narcissus' Looking-Glass', *George Eliot Review*, 28 (1997), 49-58. Interestingly enough, Ludwig Feuerbach, whose thought exerted a profound influence on Eliot's own, forwards an opinion on this theme which is central to his entire thesis: 'Consciousness is the characteristic mark of a perfect nature...Even human vanity attests this truth. A man looks in the glass; he has complacency in his appearance. This complacency is a necessary, involuntary consequence of the completeness, the beauty of his form. A beautiful form is satisfied in itself, it has necessarily joy in itself - in self-contemplation. This complacency becomes vanity only when a man piques himself on his form as being his individual form, not when he admires it as a specimen of human beauty in general' (Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. George Eliot (1854; London and New York: Harper & Row, 1957), Ch. I: 1, p. 6). Both Hetty and Bathsheba are guilty of 'vanity' in the egotistical sense. Victorian literature and painting exhibit an obsessive pre-occupation with reflected feminine beauty, of women secretly viewing themselves being voyeuristically viewed by the (assumed masculine) reader of a novel or appreciator of a painting. As a symbol of vanity and introspection, the reflective (psychological) medium becomes a closed circuit. Frederic Leighton's appropriate subject in 'The Bath of Psyche' (1890) depicts 'Mind/Soul' looking - quite satisfied at her reflected image - into herself in the water; it is highly claustrophobic. From an entirely different perspective, the sequence of pictures - whether painted in words by Eliot and Hardy, or in paint by Leighton - of women looking at their own reflections, are imperfect copies: each depicts less of each 'herself' than the original/actual image reflected in mirror/water.

³¹ J. Hillis Miller's *Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 123-4. Cf. Bathsheba's complete consciousness with Matilda Johnson's mental absence as, secretly watched by the trumpet-major, she is 'standing before the looking-glass, apparently lost in thought' (*TM*, XVIII).

³² See Judith Mitchell, 'Hardy's Female Reader', in *The Sense of Sex: Feminist Perspectives on Hardy*, ed. Margaret Higonnet (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 172-87.

message is clear: physical observation of material evidence is unreliable and Bathsheba is left, for now, as an equivocal and inscrutable 'picture'.

But neither the mirror nor Hardy lies, and artifice seems to have the final place here, suggested into existence by Oak's 'cynical' position which colours things in an entirely new way. It is he, not Hardy, who introduces the moral overtones; it is his visual bias which dominates a narrative whose real subject is Bathsheba; and, having looked at and evaluated the facts from his high moral ground, Oak, not Hardy, delivers the parsimonious verdict: 'She has her faults...And the greatest of them is - well, what it is always...Vanity' (*FMC*, I).³³ This severe indictment in some ways takes us back to no point of view at all save our own for it stems from Oak's own wounded pride and is therefore suspect; he is far from the 'passive watcher without fault or blame' that Berger would have us believe.³⁴ He is prejudiced and his inflexible perspective is limiting and limited, for 'in making even horizontal and clear inspections we colour and mould according to the wants within us whatever our eyes bring in' (*FMC*, II). Whether he is 'offered as a fully adequate "register" or guide'³⁵ or not is really beside the point: he *is* the moral guide, whatever his failings, and his point of view is authorially sanctioned as the most reliable in the novel.

With Knight's acerbic conclusion that a woman's 'backwardness' is 'because she soon exhausted her capacity for developing' (*PBE*, Ch. 18) and Oak's negative conclusion that females are prescriptively infirm, Hardy sets himself an impossible task: to show the growth of moral and perceptual consciousness in a debilitated, unwitting vessel for evil.³⁶ But it is not so much growth as restriction that results from the

³³ See Judith Mitchell's *The Stone and the Scorpion: The Female Subject of Desire in the Novels of Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1994), pp. 164-5, for an analysis of this opening.

³⁴ Sheila Berger, *Thomas Hardy and Visual Structures: Framing, Disruption, Process* (London and New York: New York University Press, 1990), p. 82.

³⁵ See Phillip Mallett, 'Thomas Hardy: An Idiosyncratic Mode of Regard', in *A Spacious Vision: Essays on Hardy*, ed. Phillip Mallett and D.R. Draper (Newmill: Patten Press, 1994), pp. 18-32. Mallett considers that the treatment received by Oak from the narrator does not 'make him the moral centre of the novel, or at any rate, not its sole moral centre. Oak is not offered as a fully adequate "register" or guide to our reading of [Bathsheba's] character' (p. 21).

³⁶ See Peter J. Casagrande, 'A New View of Bathsheba Everdene', in *Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Dale Kramer (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 50-73 (espec. pp. 59-61), who considers 'the difficulty of showing moral growth in a character conceived of as infirm', by comparing Wordsworth's 'She was a Phantom of Delight' and Hardy's creative misreading of it. Lawrence's 'Do Women Change', *Phoenix*, II, 538-32, reinforces the essential unchangeability of women while tracing the stages through which she evolves over the millenia: 'No, women don't change. They only go through a rather regular series of phases. They are first the slave; then the obedient helpmeet; then the respected spouse; then the noble matron; then the splendid woman and citizen; then the independent female; then the modern girl...and the whole cycle starts afresh, on and on, till in the course of a thousand years or two we come once more to the really "modern" girl' (p. 541). One may suggest that whereas Bathsheba occupies the development from 'obedient helpmeet' to 'respected spouse' (the entry into which pattern she must earn through submission), Sue manages to approach the last stages.

numerous visual shock tactics, and though Bathsheba's intrinsic irrationality is not erased, the crushing process twists her into a lifeless, two-dimensional reflection of her former self and consigns her to the oblivion of masculine convention. Yet despite the odds, Bathsheba resists. When she first meets Oak face to face, she wrestles back control of how she is seen, the 'delicate picture' painted by the narrative eye and nominated by Gabriel submitting before her confident self-'portrait': 'The adjustment of the farmer's hazy conceptions of her charms to the portrait of herself she now presented him with was less a diminution than a difference' (*FMC*, III). After all, 'Sensations (obj[ective]) [are] more vivid than recollections (subj[ective])' (*LN*, I, 732).³⁷ Yet, notwithstanding Bathsheba's attempt at self-determination, Oak enjoys the masculine prerogative of processing the female through a sexually, and thus morally, charged look.³⁸ As he objectifies and masters what he sees, 'the woman [is] obliged to play the role in which she has been cast by being seen',³⁹ and here fulfils the text's scopic desire.

The construction of meaning through shifting glances approximates Lacan's theory of 'scopic drive'.⁴⁰ In exercising his role, the perceiver establishes himself 'in a function of desire' (the looks over hedges, through holes and other apertures being metaphorical gestures of penetration), but as the gaze represents the 'underside of consciousness', visualization involves a mis-seeing by the observer who narcissistically projects his desire onto the perceived to complete himself.⁴¹ Gabriel is first aroused by looking at a girl looking at herself, but as this reality does not correspond with his preconceived desires, he seizes the next opportunity to re-enact the experience, places it under his visual jurisdiction, and selects those details worthy of optical 'judgement': in a highly suggestive moment, his eyes drink her ample 'contours' and 'proportions with a

³⁷ Auguste Comte, *Social Dynamics*, vol III of *System of Positive Polity*, trans. E.S. Beesley, R Congreve, et al., 4 vols (London: Longman, Green & Co., 1875-77), III, 17-18.

³⁸ See Julie Grossman, 'Thomas Hardy and the Role of Observer', *English Literary History*, 56 (Fall, 1989), 619-38: 'there is usually some erotic content to scenes where Hardy's observers look at one another' (p. 620). Much of the paper deals with sexual glances as precursors to or substitutes for sexual activity. See also Susan Beegel, 'Bathsheba's Lovers: Male Sexuality in *Far from the Madding Crowd*', *Tennessee Studies in Literature*, 27 (1984), 108-27.

³⁹ George Wotton, *Thomas Hardy: Towards a Materialist Criticism*, pp. 129-30. See also John Lucas, 'Hardy's Women', in *The Literature of Change: Studies in the Nineteenth-Century Provincial Novel* (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press; New York: Barnes & Noble, 1977), pp. 119-91, which argues that Hardy's heroines tend to be viewed from the perspective of their lovers, usually to their detriment.

⁴⁰ See Jacques Lacan, 'Of the Gaze as *Objet petit a*', in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. A. Sheridan (London: Hogarth Press, 1977).

⁴¹ See E.M. Nollen, 'The Loving Look in *Far from the Madding Crowd*', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 13 (1986), 69-73.

long consciousness of pleasure' (*FMC*, III). And Freud's definition of 'scopophilia' finds that 'the eye corresponds to the erotogenic zone':

The eye is perhaps the zone most remote from the sexual object, but it is... liable to be the most frequently stimulated by the particular quality of excitation whose cause, when it occurs in a sexual object, we describe as beauty.⁴²

This theory is certainly validated, and before a single word is spoken, the suppressed erotic feelings of Hardy and Oak have been articulated in a voyeuristic dialogue.⁴³ Indeed, so explicit is the meaning that it is experienced as a physical sensation:

Rays of male vision seem to have a tickling effect upon virgin faces in rural districts; she brushed hers with her hand, as if Gabriel had been irritating its pink surface by actual touch. (*FMC*, III)⁴⁴

These tactile 'rays of male vision' are registered in Bathsheba's erasive response, the suggestive 'tickling' receiving a moral brush-off from the violated recipient.⁴⁵

This meeting develops the polarity which colours the moral climate: observation (directly present) antagonizes memory (subjectively latent). Hardy envisaged memory or 'reminiscence' as a 'projection of consciousness into days gone by' and its practice as 'less an endowment than a disease' (*FMC*, XXV) for it only 'stir[s] feelings of regret' (*FMC*, XI). At the end, the success of Bathsheba's education is weighed by her ability to distinguish between the moral value of each, for memory's 'informations...constitute the

⁴² Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, trans. James Strachy with Anna Freud, 24 vols (London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1886-1939), VII, 169, 209. Hillis Miller, *Distance and Desire*, considers 'watching' in Hardy's novels as an epistemological stance, a 'detachment of consciousness' (p. 9), but he does not acknowledge the erotic element.

⁴³ See T.R. Wright, *Hardy and the Erotic* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1989): 'The heroines of Hardy's early novels are presented primarily as objects of erotic interest not only for the narrators and for the male characters...but also for the implied reader/voyeur' (p. 34). See Part I, 'Introduction: The Erotic Subject', pp. 1-28, of Mitchell's *The Stone and the Scorpion*. Mitchell considers Victorian heroines as erotic objects and subjects encompassed by 'The Look of Desire', and determines the extent to which each author dared to invest their female characters with erotic subjectivity. Hardy himself was something of a voyeur of beautiful women, including prostitutes, as numerous passages in *The Life* testify. Peter Widdowson, *Thomas Hardy* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1996), also comments on Hardy's scopophilic fascination with (elusive) female sexuality, and goes on to ask, 'How does he render and depict female sexuality? Is it always as a reflex of the Male Gaze - that of his male characters or of Hardy's own scopophilic eye?' (pp. 8, 17).

⁴⁴ Hetty imagines experiencing the same tactile rays from Donnithorne: she 'became conscious that his eyes were fixed on her... looking down on her with eyes that seemed to touch her' (*Adam Bede*, I. 9).

⁴⁵ For the perceptual 'victimization' of Bathsheba from both Oak and Hardy, see Patricia Ingham, *Thomas Hardy* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), pp. 30-4. Daryl Ogden, 'Bathsheba's Visual Estate: Female Spectatorship in *Far from the Madding Crowd*', *Journal of Narrative Technique*, 23:1 (1993), 1-15, focuses on how relationships in the novel uphold and transform the culturally traditional 'male visual mastery of women'. Bathsheba is not just an object of male gaze, but also a spectator, thereby challenging the assumption of the 'dominant masculine gaze'. The subject is also considered in general in *The Sense of Sex: Feminist Perspectives on Hardy*, ed. Higgonnet.

furniture of the mind, and make the difference between its civilized condition and a state of nature'.⁴⁶ Her 'civilized' instructor already wields a dynamic combination, 'recalling...by intensity of gaze' (*Works*, IV, 284) her earlier disreputable conduct, the 'impressions...being the reflections of things in a mental mirror'.⁴⁷ But Oak's confusion of past assumptions and present facts precludes neutral assessment and leaves him too embarrassed to sustain his visual accusation: 'a perception caused him to withdraw his own eyes from hers as suddenly as if he had been caught in a theft' (ib.). This authorially-endorsed appropriation reworks the perspective; Oak's surreptitious spying makes him the thief of Bathsheba's autonomy, that 'sovereignty over herself'.

No sooner is Oak officiating as moral censor than the role is strengthened, his sanctimonious recapitulation of her 'strange antics' provoking feelings of shame, regret and recrimination:

For, as without law there is no sin, without eyes there is no indecorum; and she appeared to feel that Gabriel's espial had made her an indecorous woman without her own connivance. (*FMC*, III)⁴⁸



The idea's force is weakened by eccentricities of style which confuse subject matter and form; such examples are far less evocative of Hardy's meaning than simple phraseology would allow, yet the blame is clearly laid at Oak's feet, or eyes. The shifting moral/optical responsibility traces the corruption of a natural gesture as the didactic eye monopolizes the view's interpretation.⁴⁹ But Oak's offensive shaming of the 'reddening' reprobate shames and humiliates him in turn, and in an attempt to retract the crime he averts the guilty weapons: he 'looked the other way, and wondered when she would recover sufficient to justify him in facing her again' (ib.). When he does turn, she is gone. The verdict favours the victim. And so does Hardy.

⁴⁶ John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (1870; London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1906), p. 53.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴⁸ 'An indecorous woman' is surely a euphemism for whore, Victorian fiction displaying the patriarchal tendency not only to differentiate between the sexes, but to range women against one another in the Madonna/whore polarization. Rosemarie Morgan, *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1988), contends that there is no equivalent among men in Victorian literature of the 'conceptual bifurcation of women' (p. xii), but this is precisely what Hardy does contribute in his novels through Oak/Troy, Clym/Wildeve, Winterborne/Fitzpiers, Clare/d'Urberville, and in his short stories through Nicholas Long/James Bellaton (*The Waiting Supper*), and Ned Hipcroft/Mop Ollamoor (*The Fiddler of the Reels*). In her discussion of *The Dynasts*, Susan Dean, *Hardy's Poetic Vision in 'The Dynasts': The Diorama of a Dream* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), acknowledges Hardy's masculine dualisms, yet no critic has as yet labelled the men Madonna/whore. Even so, it is obvious that Hardy insinuates this dialectic into both sexes.

⁴⁹ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972; New York: Viking, 1973), points out that looking is an activity of control, a visualized power hierarchy of observer and observed. In Hardy this is invariably male and female respectively.

At such moments 'the point of view vacillates between [Hardy's] observers and an omniscient narrator',⁵⁰ a mental combination which marks a new kind of author/character relationship:

Hardy incorporates the use of what we call Jamesian 'reflectors' into a traditionally Victorian framework of narrative omniscience. Hardy's anticipation of a modern narrative technique goes along with a post-Victorian realism that, like James's, takes into account the psychological relationship between seeing and understanding, observation and meaning.⁵¹

Contemporaries, unaccustomed to and disconcerted by such methods, regretted Hardy's tendency to embody 'in the objects of his studies some of the subtler thoughts which they have suggested to his own mind':⁵² this betrayal of art's sacred impersonality 'shakes our confidence in the truthfulness' - the 'vivid reality' - of what is so 'graphically given'.⁵³ But by synthesizing his moral retina with his characters', Hardy indirectly teaches the correct perceptual-ethic: they supply the 'observation', Hardy the 'meaning'. Thus, confronted with the significance behind Oak's visual reproach, Bathsheba lives in guilt and feels obliged, through shame, to *be seen* living up to his moral expectations.⁵⁴ She senses, however reluctantly, in Feuerbachian terms, that

the agreement of others is...my criterion of the normalness, the universality, the truth of my thoughts. I cannot so abstract myself from myself as to judge myself with perfect freedom and disinterestedness; but another has an impartial judgment; through him I correct, complete, extend my own judgment, my own taste, my own knowledge.⁵⁵

These moral parameters may be indebted to a familiarity with Newman's *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (1870). Newman says that 'the feeling of conscience...is a moral sense'⁵⁶ which is used 'as a sanction of right conduct...and in this

⁵⁰ Grossman, 'Thomas Hardy and the Role of Observer', p. 61.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 619-20. See Mitchell, *The Stone and the Scorpion*, who, questionably classing Hardy as 'one of the most characteristic exponents of the realist genre in an era of high realism' (p. 157), appreciates that 'writing before the conception of the stream-of-consciousness novels, authors of realist novels tended to rely heavily on a "blend" of voices - a character's and the narrator's - in order to convey the characters' mental processes' (p. 158).

⁵² Hutton, *TH:CA*, I, 24.

⁵³ Anon., *Saturday Review*, XXXIX (Jan 9, 1875), 57-8; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 95-100 (I, 97).

⁵⁴ As Laura Mulvey asserts in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), voyeurism is a way of 'ascertaining guilt..., asserting control, and subjecting the guilty person through punishment or forgiveness' (pp. 21-2).

⁵⁵ Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, Ch. XVI, p. 159. Her personal moral 'limitation' (though endemic to the sex at large) 'humiliates, shames, and perturbs me' (ib., Ch. I: 1, p. 7).

⁵⁶ Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, p. 105.

respect it corresponds to our perception of the beautiful and deformed,'⁵⁷ a major concern of Hardy's. Moreover, Newman's explanation that 'conscience...considered as a moral sense...is a sense of admiration and disgust, of approbation and blame',⁵⁸ is dramatized in Oak's perceptual hectoring of Bathsheba. Hardy's personified Conscience 'excites...confusion, foreboding, self-condemnation'⁵⁹ in the Culpable; that she feels a 'responsibility', and is 'ashamed' and 'frightened', 'at transgressing the voice of conscience...implies that there is One to whom we are responsible'.⁶⁰ That One is Oak who simultaneously secularizes Newman's theological 'dictate of conscience'⁶¹ and subverts tradition's view of women as the 'centripetal...moral forces' or 'the conscience of men'.⁶²

Hardy integrates Newman's moral conscience with the moral retina of Ruskin's *Modern Painters*⁶³ to create the perceptual psychology operating in *Far from the Madding Crowd*. For Hardy and Ruskin, physical observation was the superficial precursor to a profound evaluation of the seen by the 'imagination penetrative', the 'aesthetic faculty', and the 'theoretic faculty'⁶⁴ which, together, create 'the intellectual lens and moral retina, by which, and on which, our informing thoughts are concentrated and represented' (*Works*, IV, 36). Each Hardy character embodies one aspect of this code. Gabriel, as moral judge, jury and executioner, manages the superior 'penetrative' imagination. 'Introspective far beyond his neighbours' (*FMC*, VI), Oak provides the firm axis, the 'solidity' (*FMC*, I) his name suggests,⁶⁵ against which all else is measured. His 'special power' lies in the fact that he is 'morally...static' (*FMC*, II),⁶⁶ and it is the rarity of his 'sound judgement' (*FMC*, XX) which encourages Bathsheba to seek him out for

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 106-7.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 109. Seen. 75 below.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 111-2. Though his 'Christian' name keeps this perspective to the fore.

⁶² Havelock Ellis, *TH:CA*, III, 46. Cp. Stephen, 'Newman's Theory of Belief: the primary teaching of human nature...is the teaching of conscience' (p. 231). In moral matters, eyes are all-important. In *Adam Bede*, Hetty's agony is in part increased by the terror of being 'seen', and she composes herself in the knowledge that 'the eyes of her aunt and uncle would be upon her... They would think her conduct shameful; and shame was torture. That was poor little Hetty's conscience' (IV, 31). Her 'shame' has its successor in Bathsheba's as provoked by Oak's knowing espial of her 'shameful conduct' on horseback, but whereas Hetty's 'conscience' is pricked by the thought of detection only, Bathsheba's surrounds the very thought conceiving the action.

⁶³ See the relevant chapter in J.B. Bullen, *The Expressive Eye: Fiction and Perception in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

⁶⁴ For a fuller discussion see *Works*, IV, 36ff; 249ff.

⁶⁵ In the MS he was originally called Strong.

⁶⁶ But his meditative function as watcher and interpreter is not passive or limiting and he changes 'from being a mere spectator' (*FMC*, VI) when emergencies demand his active oversight, and as the appointed 'officer of surveillance' (*FMC*, XXIV) over Bathsheba's farm, he extends his outlook to encompass Boldwood's 'in a cheerful spirit of surveillance' (*FMC*, XLIX).

'general enlightenment' (*FMC*, LI). According to Stephen, 'a fine moral sense is a proof that the whole organization [of a person] is working soundly',⁶⁷ and Oak's esteemed virtues are reaffirmed when Bathsheba uses the 'simple lesson' they teach to evaluate herself and Boldwood. Neither has yet mastered Gabriel's meditative inclination to 'look upon the horizon of circumstances without any special regard to his own standpoint in the midst. That was how she would wish to be' (*FMC*, XLIII).⁶⁸

Oak attains this respected position because he 'remains self-contained, sealed off from everything'; he has, in Miller's phrase, 'the will not to will'⁶⁹ and this 'detachment of consciousness', crucial to Hardy's perspective, permits 'him and his spokesmen to see reality as it is'.⁷⁰ For Miller, 'reality as it is' is restricted to the isolated consciousness; the alternative position, supplied by Jones, says 'reality as it is' belongs to those 'who seem more in touch with the objective world'⁷¹ and Bathsheba's introspection clarifies the superiority of Oak's sympathetic vision through difference. Though optically swayed and coloured by 'the wants within', Oak can, as Jones indicates, look beyond his own psyche, and even while Miller and Jones approach from opposite points, they concur that each angle communicates a particular version of reality. More often, however, this version understands character and narrative eye as limited, as seeing little more than the reader who is thus implicated in the perceptual process. Oak's vision may be supreme, but the reader must evaluate its validity.

In identifying and coveting Oak's objectivism, Bathsheba unwittingly supports the novel's moral centre and appoints Gabriel as its 'Moral Element'. Hardy cited extensively from Stephen's essay,⁷² agreed that literature should refine mankind's ethical sensibilities, and in Oak, who negotiates the responsibilities of the contemporary novelist, created a personified anticipation of Stephen's argument:

⁶⁷ Stephen, 'The Moral Element in Literature', p. 42.

⁶⁸ 'We learn much more [from a teacher] by our sympathy with his modes of thinking and feeling...[T]his kind of influence is the essential and all-important' (Stephen, 'The Moral Element in Literature', p. 40).

⁶⁹ J. Hillis Miller, *Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire*, p. 6.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9. Charles P.C. Pettit, 'Narrative Techniques in *Far from the Madding Crowd*', *Thomas Hardy Society Review*, 1:1 (1975), 16-27, also considers Hardy's limitation of perspectives which exposes his perception of the isolation of the individual.

⁷¹ Lawrence O. Jones, 'Imitation and Expressionism in Thomas Hardy's Theory of Fiction', *Studies in the Novel*, 7 (1975), 507-25 (p. 513).

⁷² Hardy enthusiastically acknowledged his debt to Stephen in 1874. Stephen's 'philosophy was to influence his own for many years, indeed, more than that of any other contemporary' (*EL*, p. 132; Feb 1874). Such statements are as difficult to substantiate as similar debts to Spencer because the influence of both was so wide-ranging. Bjork does draw attention to the potential importance of Stephen's moral aesthetic for Hardy's critical views in his 'Critical Introduction' to *LN*, I, p. xxvii.

He has couched our dull eyes, drawn back the veil which hid from us the certain aspect of the world, and henceforward our views of life and the world will be more or less changed, because the bare scaffolding of fact which we previously saw will now be seen in the light of keener perceptions than our own.⁷³

What is seen through such eyes 'has all the cogency of direct vision', the worth of which depends on the reliability of the observer: 'We must ask, in what sense and how far the value of this artistic revelation may be dependent upon the moral qualities of the seer'.⁷⁴ Gabriel's intrinsic 'value' includes his selflessness; he is free from the 'moral stupidity' which spoils Dorothea,⁷⁵ and his 'moral qualities' underpin the 'imagination penetrative':

The Imagination is in no small degree dependent on acuteness of moral emotion; in fact, all moral truth can only be thus apprehended - and it is observable...that the mental sight becomes sharper with every full beat of the heart: and, therefore, all egotism, and selfish care, or regard are, in proportion to their constancy, destructive of imagination. (*Works*, IV, 287)

In *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Gabriel is the lone practitioner of the 'moral imagination', the sympathetic eye which suffuses the creeds of Ruskin, Eliot, James and Hardy; only he satisfies all interrogations. And as a synthesis of the 'moral imagination' and 'moral retina', Oak realizes the Ruskinian hypothesis that

there is reciprocal action between the intensity of moral feeling and the power of imagination...[T]hose who have keenest sympathy are those who look closest and pierce deepest...[T]hose who have so perceived...are filled with the most intense passion and gentleness of sympathy. (*Works*, IV, 257)

So keen is his perspicacity that it surrounds Oak like a radiant aura. As Burke notes, 'extreme light, by overcoming the organs of sight, obliterates all objects, so as in its effect

⁷³ Leslie Stephen, 'The Moral Element in Literature', p. 39.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, ed. A.S. Byatt (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), Ch. 21. Hereafter cited as *M*. According to Feuerbach, the prime moral failing, the 'original sin', of Christianity was its tendency towards 'exaggerated subjectivity' (Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, Ch. XVI, p. 159), where individuals turned in on their own souls. The failure to recognize what Eliot called those 'equivalent centre[s] of self, the "otherness" of others, is also the cardinal sin in her novels, and ideas 'wrought back to the directness of sense' (*M*, Ch. 21) constitute the core of the moral vision at work in Eliot's world. Moreover, Feuerbach's doctrine bears a striking resemblance to Hardy's personification of an objective moral conscience in Oak: 'The other is my *thou*...my *alter ego*, man objective to me, the revelation of my own nature, the eye seeing itself' (*The Essence of Christianity*, Ch. XVI, p. 158). The last two clauses are of particular pertinence give the symbolic significance associated with Oak's handling of Bathsheba's own symbol of Self, her mirror. He becomes in this reflective capacity, for her, 'my eye seeing myself'. And his task is also distinctly moral. Furthermore, as Feuerbach continues: 'My fellow-man is my objective conscience, he makes my failings a reproach to me...The consciousness of the moral law, of right, of propriety, of truth itself, is indissolubly connected with my consciousness of another than myself' (*ib.*). This serves as a perfect commentary on the ideas structuring the "accusation" scene in Ch. IV.

exactly to resemble darkness'.⁷⁶ So, dark with excessive bright like Milton's angel,⁷⁷ Hardy's angel is inscrutable, outside the visual range of his peers whose 'organs of sight' he blinds. His refulgence is fascinating in its painful attraction,⁷⁸ and when The Light of Weatherbury first enters the malthouse

everyone ocularly criticized him to the degree expressed by contracting the flesh of their foreheads and looking at him with narrowed eyelids, as if he had been a light too strong for their sight. (FMC, VIII)

Oak comes into his power early via a horrifying optical symbol which, condensing after the loss of his sheep, emerges as an effective crystallization which engraves his memory: 'The pool glittered like a dead man's eye, and as the world awoke a breeze blew, shaking and elongating the reflection of the moon without breaking it...All this Oak saw and remembered' (FMC, V).⁷⁹ His tenacity shields him from the moment's nihilistic potential and he accepts the irremovable stain with an equanimity which recalls Woolf's allusion to the farmer's 'open-eyed endurance without flinching'.⁸⁰ The unnatural glitter of this redundant visual medium is located in the objects themselves and their arrangement, and, as with Locke's *camera obscura* or 'a camera's timed exposure, movement and the passing of time are captured in an everlasting frozen moment'.⁸¹

The strategy recalls Wordsworth's 'spots of time', those 'memorials' that mark human existence with their 'renovating virtue' and confer 'profoundest knowledge' on the mind. 'Such moments / Are scattered everywhere'⁸² in life just as Hardy's iconic Moments of Vision are experiences scattered throughout the novels. But the Hardyan Moment does not influence the maturing eye so definitely as the Wordsworthian Spot,

⁷⁶ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), in *The Works of Edmund Burke*, 8 vols (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854), I, 49-181 (I, 107).

⁷⁷ 'Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear / Yet dazzle heaven' (*Paradise Lost*, III. 380).

⁷⁸ Burke refers to Locke's opinion that 'an excessive light is painful to the sense' (*A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, I, 155).

⁷⁹ The echo is surely of the Boy of Winander episode which Hardy inverts with vacillating irony. He deforms, contorts and twists the Wordsworthian reflection of stars in the water and the accompanying atmosphere of nature's benevolence. It also bears a striking similarity to Wordsworth's 'Resolution and Independence' (1802), in *Wordsworth: Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 2nd edn., 1936; rpt. 1974), in which the despondent Poet encounters the leech-gatherer (see espec. lines 53, 78-81). The horrifying remonstrance intimated in the 'dead man's eye' may also be derived from Coleridge's 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' (1797-1816), in *Coleridge: Poetical Works*, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), where, after the killing of the albatross, the mariner finds nothing more horrible than 'the curse in a dead man's eye!' (Part IV line 260).

⁸⁰ Virginia Woolf, 'The Novels of Thomas Hardy', *The Common Reader: Second Series* (London: Hogarth Press, 1932), pp. 245-57 (p. 251).

⁸¹ Berger, *Thomas Hardy and Visual Structures*, p. 134-5.

⁸² Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (1805), Book XII, lines 208-24.

the quasi-subjective breeze which imperceptibly remodels the vision implying that this need not remain the absolute condition of things. Indeed, this malevolent, naturalized eye is displaced by a more beneficent optic:

The sheep-washing pool was a perfectly clear circular basin of brickwork in the meadows, full of the clearest water. To birds on the wing its glassy surface, reflecting the light sky, must have been visible for miles around as a glistening Cyclops' eye in a green face. (*FMC*, XIX)⁸³

This exhilarating, inspiring view is jeopardized by the tension insinuated in the huge, anthropomorphosized 'green face'; studded with a 'glistening Cyclops' eye',⁸⁴ it turns the universe upside down however deliberately it seeks to associate man and nature. In addition, the mindless mirroring of vacancy in this mutually locked gaze excludes the human eye. In both tableaux, the human is an irrelevant observer whose glance is not just denied reciprocation but is entirely omitted from the reflective pond-eye. It is a problematical image for both reader and text, but its significance rests in its incongruity.

Oak neither needs nature as his looking-glass, nor presumes it to function in that capacity. He teaches Bathsheba this lesson in objectivity by confiscating her mirror, the medium of her self-reference, and substituting himself, thereby practising Ruskin's theory of the imagination as a 'penetrating possession-taking' faculty (*Works*, IV, 251). Though 'the delight of merely seeing her effaced for a time his perception of the great difference between seeing and possessing' (*FMC*, VIII), the text's scopic inclination shows that there is little difference between the two. Oak's 'mere seeing' of Bathsheba during their early acquaintance allows someone of his sagacity a real insight into her character, and true knowing (he is 'excessively knowing') is tantamount to having. From the outset Oak prophetically locks her in a visual circuit with him: "'Whenever you look up, there I shall be - and whenever I look up, there will be you'" (*FMC*, IV), and his repeated optical appropriations guarantee unmitigated visual and physical mastery of her at the end.⁸⁵

⁸³ It seems that the locations where instruction takes place have their counterparts: Oak faces the two pools, and Bathsheba learns in two hollows - first with Troy and then in the swamp.

⁸⁴ Cp. Wordsworth's 'To the Daisy' (1802), the flower being imaged as 'A little Cyclops with one eye / Staring to threaten and defy... I see thee glittering from afar -' (lines 25-6, 33).

⁸⁵ D.H. Lawrence argues exactly the same case, though much more explicitly, in *Sons and Lovers* (1913; Harmondsworth: Penguin,

Oak's objective lucidity of vision juxtaposes Bathsheba's deficient subjectivism, the immaturity of her 'moral...sensibility' (*FMC*, VII) being evident in her exclusive regard of Oak's imperfections which are 'patent to the blindest'; the narrative eye, seeing Gabriel's virtues as analogous to 'metals in a mine' (*FMC*, XXIX), exhibits the extent of her 'prescriptive infirmity'.⁸⁶ Her eye, responsive only to superficial beauty, dictates her 'means of seeing' Oak's antithesis, the handsome soldier whose 'deformities lay deep down from a woman's vision while his embellishments were upon the surface' (ib.). Unaware of the ethical ramifications behind having to 'adjust her eyes' (*FMC*, XXV) to accommodate this sight, Bathsheba is 'dazzled by brass and scarlet' (*FMC*, XXXI), and falls foul of Ruskin's 'false taste' which is

merely that of falseness or inaccuracy in conclusion, not of moral delinquency ...False taste may be known...by its pride...for it is ever...self-exulting; its eye is always upon itself, and it tests all things round it by the way they fit in. But true taste is forever growing, learning...and testing itself by the way that it fits things. (*Works*, IV, 60).⁸⁷

Lewes defines 'false reasoning' as 'distorted or defective vision';⁸⁸ Burke explains 'wrong taste' as 'a defect of judgement' which 'may arise from a natural weakness of understanding';⁸⁹ (a 'prescriptive infirmity'); and Newman, too, discusses Taste (of the beautiful, appropriately enough) in the context of Moral Sense: 'Taste is its own evidence, appealing to nothing beyond its own sense of the beautiful or the ugly, and enjoying the specimens of the beautiful simply for their own sake'.⁹⁰ Hardy synthesizes these concepts and bequeaths them to Bathsheba; indeed, Old Everdene's salacious

1981). Discussing the status of women with Clara, Paul agrees that he would rather a woman allowed a man to fight for her than fight for herself:

"When she fights for herself she seems like a dog before a looking-glass, gone into a mad fury with its own shadow."

"And you are the looking-glass?" she asked, with a curl of the lip.

"Or the shadow," he replied.

"I am afraid," she said, "that you are too clever."

"Well, I leave it to you to be good," he retorted, laughing. "Be good, sweet maid, and just let me be clever." (2.9; Lawrence's emphasis)

⁸⁶ F.H. Bradley was later to characterize 'error' in relation to perceptions of reality as 'the strange prejudice that outward sensations are never false, and the dull blindness which fails to realize that the "inward" is a fact just as solid as the "outward"' ('Error', in *Appearance and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co.; New York: Macmillan, 1893), Ch. XVI, pp. 184-96 (p. 189)). Bathsheba personifies this tendency, particularly in her regard of Oak and Troy.

⁸⁷ Cp. Stephen, 'Newman's Theory of Belief: The logic of facts does not lie on the surface, to be picked up by the first observer who comes by, but requires a collateral process of preparing and testing and corresponding logical apparatus' (p. 183).

⁸⁸ G.H. Lewes, 'The Principles of Success in Literature', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 (1865), 85-95, 'The Principle of Vision': 185-96, 'Of Vision in Art': 572-89, 697-709 (p. 583); the debate is continued in *Fortnightly Review*, 2 (1865), 257-68, 689-710 (1, p. 190).

⁸⁹ Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, I, 64. See also the Introduction, 'On Taste', I, 52-67.

⁹⁰ Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, p. 107.

reputation for giving his eyes over to unlawfulness when it came to a pretty face implies that her failing is a moral inheritance: 'The sins of the parents are visited upon the children' (*FMC*, X), and this innate 'inadequacy' or 'weakness' (*FMC*, XXIX) is a 'taste' controlled by narcissistic 'pride...[I]ts eye is always upon itself' (*Works*, IV, 60). Thus, conscious of 'the beauty of surface' and its 'power to attract' a 'rigidly fixed' masculine gaze of admiration (*FMC*, XII), Bathsheba finds in Troy an eminently more suitable mirror-substitute than Oak simply because he satisfies her vanity.

Such 'emblazoned fault[s]', of visual and epistemological significance, are empirically contextualized: 'We learn that it is not the rays which bodies absorb, but those which they reject, that give them the colours they are known by' (*FMC*, XXII). 'We learn' from sensory experience, and Bathsheba wants Oak to 'teach her' (*FMC*, XLIII) to see correctly just as Hardy may have learned from Newton's *Opticks* (1704) that 'the permanent Colours of Natural Bodies...reflect some sort of Rays', each looking 'most splendid and luminous in the Light of its own Colour'; and, most pertinently, 'Cinnabar in the homogeneous red Light is most resplendent'.⁹¹ In 1855, Bain claimed that 'if red were the one universal tint, we should never have recognized colour at all',⁹² while Helmholtz's comparable explanation of colour appeared only a year before the publication of *Far from the Madding Crowd*:

Cinnabar reflects the rays of great length without any obvious loss, while it absorbs almost the whole of the other rays. Accordingly, this substance appears of the same red colour as the beams which it throws back into the eye.⁹³

Troy is 'known by' this dominant vermilion ray, this 'strongly luminous and resplendent red',⁹⁴ it merges his moral and occupational status so that he 'is simply what he is presented. He has no higher morals than most privates in the army'.⁹⁵ The sergeant's

⁹¹ Isaac Newton, *Opticks, or A Treatise of the Reflections, Refractions, Inflections and Colours of Light* (1704; 4th edn. 1730; New York: Dover, 1952), Bk I, Part II, Prop X.V, pp. 179-85 (p. 179).

⁹² Alexander Bain, 'Sense of Sight', in *The Senses and the Intellect* (1855; London: Longmans, Green & Co., 4th edn., 1894), pp. 222-59 (p. 249).

⁹³ H.L.F. von Helmholtz, *Popular Lectures on Scientific Subjects* (First Series, 1873), p. 263.

⁹⁴ Newton, *Opticks*, Bk I, Part II, Prop X.V, pp. 179-85 (p. 180).

⁹⁵ Anon., *Westminster Review*, CLII n.s. XLVII (Jan 1875), 265; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 87-90 (I, 88). See Stephen, 'The Moral Element in Literature': 'To say that a man is immoral is so far to say...that his mental and material organization is somehow out of joint; that some of his instincts are defective or perverted' (p. 42). Troy is no doubt an anticipation of Alec, 'the blood-red ray in the spectrum' of Tess's life (*TD*, V).

defective 'moral retina' is thus identifiable as the 'aesthetic faculty', a debased form of the 'theoretic faculty' which

is concerned with the moral perception and appreciation of ideas and beauty. And the error respecting it is, the considering and calling it Aesthetic, degrading it to a mere operation of sense, or perhaps worse, of custom. (*Works*, IV, 35-6).

Where the theoretic operates, 'the perception is altogether moral' (*Works*, IV, 191), and Troy, oblivious of the 'narrowing of higher tastes and sensations' which his 'moral and aesthetic poverty' (*FMC*, XXV) entails, typifies this shortcoming. And he is presented as a moral rather than a psychological study precisely because he is bereft of any mitigating subjective life: he has a child-like 'moral...poverty' as his reasons lack any reciprocating or rationalizing influence; he is a superficial sensualist who sees only 'what was before his eyes'; he regards neither the past with understanding nor the future with circumspection, 'his outlook upon time' resembling 'a transient flash of the eye now and then' (ib.). Moreover, Bathsheba's 'culpability' in subsequent troubles also results from an inability to engage in 'subtle and careful inquiry into consequences' (*FMC*, XXV). Such compounded temporal ignorance obviates any moral decision and when they meet each is driven to satiate their need for physical admiration: Bathsheba is as visually stunned by his 'brass and scarlet' as he is violently 'arrested' by her 'alluring beauty' (*FMC*, XXVI). After 'critically regarding her', Troy concludes in a 'frank' manner, "'I've never seen a woman as beautiful as you'" (ib.).⁹⁶

Liddy remarks that "'men be such a terrible class of society to look at a body'" (*FMC*, XII), and Ruskin addresses the significance of such voyeurism:

We do indeed see continually that men having naturally acute perception of the beautiful, yet not receiving it with pure heart, nor into their hearts at all,

⁹⁶ As Bain argues, the pleasures of sight are of a more lasting kind than those of the inferior senses. From this...they enter into the feelings of the Beautiful ('Sense of Sight', in *The Senses and the Intellect*, p. 247). Beauty, knowledge and sight are combined in Plato's disquisition on love, Socrates informing Phaedrus that 'sight is the keenest of our physical senses, though it does not bring us knowledge. What overpowering love knowledge would inspire if it could bring as clear an image of itself before our sight, and the same may be said of the other forms which are fitted to arouse love. But as things are it is only beauty which has the privilege of being both the most clearly discerned and the most lovely' (*Phaedrus*, trans. Walter Hamilton (Harmondsworth: Penguin 60s Classics, 1995), p. 36). It is also during this episode that Troy, declaring his love, offers Bathsheba his gold watch which bears the inscription 'Cedit amor rebus - "Love yields to circumstance"'. For a fuller discussion, see Rocio G. Davis, "'Cedit Amour Rebus": Love and Circumstance in Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 22 (Winter 1996), 5-12; also Dennis Kurzun, 'The Anatomy of Two Promises: The Cases of "The Rash Bride" and Bathsheba Everdene', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 22 (Winter 1996), 13-21.

never comprehend it...but make it a mere...seasoning of lower sensual pleasures...and the sense of beauty sinks into the servant of lust.
(*Works*, IV, 49)⁹⁷

Frank's frankness⁹⁸ is not all that it appears. His expedient 'narrowing of the higher tastes' intrudes into his feminine 'system of ethics' (*FMC*, XXV) which is founded on deception and 'unfathomable lies' (*FMC*, XXXI), and though he never crosses the line dividing 'the spruce vices from the ugly' (*FMC*, XXV), his morals, when lax, are casually tempered with flippancy. A competent 'male dissembler', he can 'be one thing and seem another' (*FMC*, XXV), and the rustics unwittingly articulate this fundamental truth in musing that "'evil do thrive so in these times that ye may be as much deceived in the cleanest shaved and whitest shirted man as in the raggedest tramp'" (*FMC*, VIII). Embodying this paradox, Troy challenges Bathsheba's capacity for moral and perceptual growth.

To her credit, Bathsheba knows that Troy's 'outlook' is as 'a transient flash of the eye'; but she ignores it. She is perturbed by his moral indiscriminacy over aesthetic matters, and instinctively senses that 'men always covet' the 'visually pleasant' (*FMC*, XXVI); but she indulges him. Even when he tells her that he has been so 'afflicted' since experienced enough 'to know loveliness from deformity', she is too easily distracted by his flattery to pursue her condemnation:

"Tis to be hoped your sense of the difference you speak of doesn't stop at faces, but extends to morals as well."

"I won't speak of morals or religion...Though perhaps I should have made a very good Christian if you pretty women hadn't made me an idolater."
(ib.)

So d'Urberville blames Tess's "'dangerous...good looks'" (*TD*, XLV) for seducing him away from his religious zeal.⁹⁹ According to the victims, female beauty exerts "'too much

⁹⁷ Cp. 'We look upon woman only to gratify the lust of the eye' (Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe* (1819), ed. A.N. Wilson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), Ch. XXXVI). For Burke also, 'the passion belonging to [the society of sex] is called love, and it contains a mixture of lust; its object is the beauty of women' (*A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, I, 84-5). See also Part IV, Section XIX: 'The Physical Cause of Love' (I, 160-1).

⁹⁸ Cp. "'Frankness, a usual quality among honourable men, was ridiculed out of society." Thucydides on characteristics of politicians of his day' (*LN*, I, 557).

⁹⁹ Both situations perhaps acknowledge the plight of Ruth in Gaskell's novel where the heroine, confronted by her seducer who tries in vain to persuade her back to him, remarks, "'Ruth, you will drive me mad...I wish you were not so beautiful'" (*Ruth* (1853), ed. Alan Shelston (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), Ch. XXIV).

power" (ib.) and forces men to compromise their moral integrity when in truth they are all too willing to capitulate. Only bitter experience forces Bathsheba to admit the flaw, own that she 'had always looked down upon him' (*FMC*, L)¹⁰⁰ from a superior moral height, and concede that their liaison was nothing more than an aesthetic 'infatuation' (*FMC*, XXIX) fuelled by false evidence amassed by the physical eye.

But Hardy insists that Bathsheba's submission is viewed in its proper context for Troy is a skilled and fatal seducer, as Fanny Robin testifies. Watching through the narrative eye, the reader sees this problem dramatized in the gargoyle,¹⁰¹ a formal figure which sharpens the episode's significance. An eclectic compilation of incongruous impressions, the 'hideous' monster nevertheless inheres an unequivocal 'symmetry in the distortion' (*FMC*, XLVI). Hardy demonstrates a fearless daring in throwing together a series of unconnected symbols, yet it is left to the reader to extrapolate their hidden truths; showing rather than telling forces the observer into creative co-operation. And it is Troy's pretentious mimicry of contrition rather than the grotesque creature itself which occasions the anomalous absurdity of the moment, his contrived assumption of a conventional attitude in planting the bulbs drawing a brutal and tactless response: 'the persistent torrent from the gargoyle's jaws directed all its vengeance onto the grave' (*FMC*, XLVI).

It is not his action that is condemned and obliterated, but the moral wrongness of its motivating force, yet Troy cannot handle the effect, sees himself differently, and doubts himself for the first time. He has hitherto egotistically assumed the role of subject and has coped with the vicissitudes of reality precisely because they 'appertained to the hero of his story, without whom there would have been no story for him at all' (*FMC*, XLVI). Now he confronts himself as object, as subsidiary to the larger scheme of things,

¹⁰⁰ It repeats the visual position of Elfrida's relationships with Knight and Smith: 'That she looked up at and adored her new lover [Knight] from below his pedestal was even more perceptible than that she had smiled down upon Stephen from a height above him' (*PBE*, Ch. 25).

¹⁰¹ See Richard Carpenter's 'Hardy's "Gargoyles"', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 5 (Autumn 1960), 223-29, which explores Hardy's use of the grotesque as a means of probing beneath the surface of everyday realism. See also Rosemary Sumner, 'Some Surrealist Elements in Hardy's Prose and Verse', *Thomas Hardy Annual: No. 3*, ed. Norman Page (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985), pp. 39-53. It is also possible that Hardy had the brief gargoyle episode in Gaskell's *Ruth* in mind. Meeting up with her seducer in church, the forerunner of Tess learns a more pleasant lesson of moral forbearance than that experienced by Troy: 'The face was beautiful in feature...There was a half-open mouth, not in any way distorted out of its exquisite beauty by the intense expression of suffering it conveyed...And though the parted lips seemed ready to quiver with agony, the expression of the whole face, owing to these strange, stony, and yet spiritual eyes, was high and consoling. If mortal gaze had never sought its meaning before...Ruth's did now...[W]hat a soul the unknown carver must have had!...Human art was ended - human life was done - human suffering over, but this remained; it stilled Ruth's beating heart to look on it' (Ch. XXIII).

and he detests himself. He could take advantage and forge a new beginning, but his moral infirmity prevents him from seizing the opportunity afforded by this radical shift of personal perspective. Rather than 'reversing his course', he yields to mental, moral and perceptual paralysis, falls into the subjectivity of a distant past, and curses his lot:

To turn about would have been hard enough under the greatest providential encouragement; but to find the Providence, far from helping him into a new course...actually jeered his first trembling and critical attempt...was more than he could bear. (*FMC*, XLVI)

Troy's egotistical perspective on reality is, however, qualified. When his introspection reaches its most intense, Hardy externalizes the focus by providing an expansive, objective evaluation and we view the scene with considerable detachment: 'He slowly withdrew from the grave. He did not attempt to fill the hole, replace the flowers, or do anything at all. He simply threw up his cards and forswore the game' (*ib.*). It is cowardly though understandable.

Hardy interprets Troy's incipient incorrigibility through juxtaposition with Bathsheba's maturing vision, her visit to the desecrated grave demonstrating an active purpose conspicuously absent from Troy's: she replants the bulbs and redirects the water flow, and we perceive 'the immutable difference in the moral quality of the acts'.¹⁰² Such a step shows that correct judgements can and should be made, even by the flawed. Troy falls short because he submits before an extreme idealism which 'fails to take account of the **Not Self**',¹⁰³ but Lewes's remedy, 'Reasoned Realism...which reconciles Common Sense with Speculative Logic', is gradually acquired by Bathsheba. Hardy's stylistic texturing and the protagonists' perceptual and behavioural remodifications allow the reader, but not the egoist, access to the discrepancy. Dramatic irony abounds.¹⁰⁴ It is only later, tormented by hindsight, that Troy looks back on the details of these Spots: 'the sad accessories of Fanny's end confronted him as vivid pictures which threatened to be indelible' (*FMC*, XLVII), but these impressions stimulate discomfort rather than

¹⁰² Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, p. 65.

¹⁰³ G.H. Lewes, 'The Course of Modern Thought', *Fortnightly Review*, XXI (March 1, 1877), 317-27 (p. 321). See *LN*, I, 899, 1229, 1281.

¹⁰⁴ J. Hillis Miller, *Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire*, p. 296, sees this method as characteristic of Hardy's fiction, though he regards it as a purely aesthetic trait.

repentance, and the remorse is not for the deeds but for their unwelcome and inconvenient reminders.

Oak, Bathsheba and Troy provide persuasive personifications of Ruskin's theory of moral perception, but Boldwood's 'blindness' (*FMC*, XVII) refuses such neat categorization. Oak, Bathsheba and Troy act on the fruit of their perceptions to good or ill effect, but Boldwood's debility is not of the moral sphere at all; indeed, he 'had not been morally responsible for his later acts' (*FMC*, LV). Instead, his peculiarities require 'an examination into the state of [his] mind', and his idiosyncratic mode of regard being 'a condition of mental disease' which approximates insanity; this is 'the only explanation' (ib.).¹⁰⁵ Contemporaries found his 'mad passion' for Bathsheba ruined by 'a want of reality, an exaggeration which strikes a discordant note',¹⁰⁶ and it is perceptual excess which tips the balance into madness. Often 'unconsciously and abstractly' preoccupied, Boldwood is 'indifferent and seemingly so far away from all he sees around him' (*FMC*, XII), his entire bearing bespeaking a desire to withdraw and distance the objective; it is conscious avoidance rather than simple lack of awareness.

In turning from a literary to a scientific authority, Hardy offers Boldwood as a perfect case study of Comte's discourse on madness and reality:

Madness...[is] always characterized by excess of Subjectivity...Not that in madness the World Without ceases to furnish the materials for the construction going on Within...The derangement consists solely in the fact, that in consequence of too great cerebral excitement, the recollections become more vivid and distinct than the sensations.¹⁰⁷

In certain pathological cases, 'the Subjective really governs the Objective'¹⁰⁸ and Hardy condenses this dysfunction into one representative episode: Boldwood's reaction to Bathsheba's valentine. Its cumulative effect presents a working response to Hume's inquiry:

¹⁰⁵ Bullen, *The Expressive Eye*, p. 77, also draws attention to this 'pathological' condition. This madness becomes a suicidal obsession. See Frank R. Giordano, 'Farmer Boldwood: Hardy's Portrait of a Suicide', *English Literature in Transition*, 21:4 (1978), 244-53.

¹⁰⁶ Havelock Ellis, *TH:CA*, III, 37. Hardy himself refers to Boldwood's 'unswerving devotion to Bathsheba...as a fond madness' (*FMC*, XLIX).

¹⁰⁷ Comte, *System of Positive Polity*, III, 17-18; see *LN*, I, 732-4. For an enlightening discussion on Boldwood's pathological condition, see chapter 4 of Rosemary Sumner's *Thomas Hardy: Psychological Novelist* (London: Macmillan, 1981). Burke similarly speaks of 'the violent effects produced by love, which has sometimes been even wrought up to madness' (*A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, I, 75).

¹⁰⁸ Comte, *System of Positive Polity*, III, 18.

By what argument can it be proved, that the perceptions of the mind must be caused by external objects, entirely different from them, though resembling them...? It is acknowledged that, in fact, many of these perceptions arise not from anything external, as in dreams, madness, and other diseases.¹⁰⁹

Whether or not sensory perceptions are produced by external phenomena is determined, Hume says, 'by experience'. Boldwood's perceptual dealings with Bathsheba not only lack such a foundation, but are perverse and unprecedented from the start, and Hardy, resisting terms suggestive of moral shortcomings, forwards a clinical, psychological diagnosis. Boldwood seals his fate the moment he 'withholds his eyes' and denies 'her the official glance of admiration' (*FMC*, XIII); he refuses to act as her mirror.

Bathsheba retaliates visually, fights sight with sight, indelibly stamps his inner eye, and overwhelms his mind with the valentine just as Arabella monopolizes Jude's attention by hurling the pizzle. Both are sexual challenges initiated by the woman, both demand optical acknowledgement, and begin a riveting perceptual drama of possessing and being possessed. And Bathsheba's impulsive gesture develops the narrative's latent imagistic pattern by materializing those numerous signifiers of moral discomfort which frequently flood her cheeks, the 'enlarging spot' (*FMC*, IV) of a blush.¹¹⁰ These bloody circles become the branding iron, the famous wax circle on the card:

here the bachelor's gaze was continually fastening itself till the large red seal became as a blot of blood on the retina of his eye; and as he ate and drank he still read in fancy the words thereon, although they were too remote for his sight. (*FMC*, XIV)¹¹¹

Sasaki¹¹² argues that an Eliotean moments of vision, Dorothea's dissatisfaction with her honey-moon, ingrained itself onto Hardy's inner eye: 'In certain states of dull

¹⁰⁹ David Hume, *Hume's Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), pp. 152-3.

¹¹⁰ Hardy may have been thinking of a similar image in Tennyson's *Maud: A Melodrama* (1850), in *The Complete Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1898):

And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,
And suddenly, suddenly, strangely blush'd
To find they were met by my own...
And thought, is it pride, and mused and sigh'd
'No surely, now it cannot be pride.' (l. VIII)

¹¹¹ For further analysis of the passage see Ian Gregor, *The Great Web: The Form of Hardy's Major Fiction* (London: Faber & Faber, 1974), p. 54; Jean Brooks, *Thomas Hardy: The Poetic Structure* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1971), p. 71; Berger, *Thomas Hardy and Visual Structures*, pp. 44-6. This passage, though undeniably symbolic, is also a physiological fact. According to Bain, 'if a strong light is thrown upon [the retina] through the pupil of the eye, it appears of a reddish colour, which is owing to its blood-vessels' (*Sense of Sight*, in *The Senses and the Intellect*, p. 229).

¹¹² Toru Sasaki, 'On Boldwood's Retina: A "Moment of Vision" in *Far from the Madding Crowd* and its Possible Relation to *Middlemarch*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, VIII:3 (Oct 1992), 57-60. See also Lina Wright Berle, *George Eliot and Thomas Hardy: A*

forlornness Dorothea all her life continued to see the red drapery...spreading itself everywhere like a disease of the retina'.¹¹³ Each spot of time reveals its ultimate significance in retrospect; experience generates the associative process by which objects acquire a significant and instructive emotional equivalent:

Forms both pale and glowing took possession of her young sense, and fixed themselves in her memory even while she was not thinking of them, preparing strange associations which remained through her after years.¹¹⁴

Eliot accommodates extreme objective and subjective perspectives within a single vision, this passage following the progressive shift from the abstract to the concrete, and its final return to the inner mood and vision. Despite this perceptual oscillation and the intense sympathy of the narrator, there is no relinquishing of calm objectivity.

Hardy's movements between internal and external views are similarly flexible, as is his assimilation of exhibition and exposition, and in both instances an overly-stimulated imagination transforms material the fact into a subjective symbol.¹¹⁵ But whereas Eliot's showing and telling amounts to almost perfect formal coherence, Hardy's method comes dangerously close to dissonance, and he dislocates the poetical translation through an incongruous scientific analogy. The cold precision which seeks to correspond impressionable 'crystal substances' with the enormous emotional potential of the 'blot of blood' is an awkward intrusion which threatens the autonomy of the experience, and is only partially mitigated by its existence as an effort to justify, with marginal success, the correlation of the general and the particular. Eliot is more likely to interpolate than Hardy and is less disruptive when she does so; Hardy is more persuasive when he lets an

Contrast (New York: Mitchell Kennedy, 1917). Berle compares Hardy unfavourably with Eliot: his realism is one-sided, he lacks scientific detachment, and glories in the liberty of the individual. See Lawrence Jones's "Infected by a Vein of Mimeticism": George Eliot and the Technique of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *Journal of Narrative Technique*, 8:1 (1978), 56-76, and 'George Eliot and Pastoral Tragicomedie in Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *Studies in Philology*, 77 (1980), 402-25, which considers how Hardy learned how to combine pastoral realism with a strong tragic element from *Adam Bede*.

¹¹³ *M*, Ch. 20.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*.

¹¹⁵ 'For things - and among them a book in a red binding - as soon as we have perceived them are transformed within us into something immaterial, something as the same nature as all our preoccupations and sensations of that particular time, with which, indissolubly, they blend (Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C.K. Scott-Moncrieff, et al, 3 vols (New York: Random House; London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), III, 920). It is feasible that Hardy may have had Charlotte Brontë's allusion to this phenomenon in mind: Lucy Snowe receives a 'letter whose face of enamelled white and single Cyclops-eye of vermilion-red had printed themselves so clear and perfect on the retina of an inward vision' (*Villette* (1849), ed. Herbert Rosengarten and Margaret Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), Ch. XXI). But whereas Boldwood's eye is seared by both the seal and the words of his "editor", Paulina finds something completely different in hers: 'Graham's hand is like himself...and so is his seal... - a full, solid, steady drop - a distinct impress: no pointed turns harshly pricking the optic nerve' (Ch. XXXII). Hardy may also have been thinking of Tennyson's *Maud; A Melodrama* (1850): 'Tis the blot upon the brain / That will show itself without' (II. IV. viii).

episode express itself. And thus the repetition of red on white is more convincing psychologically when conceived as a subjective projection emanating directly from behind Boldwood's affected eyes: 'the only half of the sun yet visible burnt rayless, like a red flameless fire showing over a white hearthstone' (*FMC*, XIV).¹¹⁶

This visual violence hones Boldwood's perceptual existence and begins to shape an inexperienced psyche that has 'never before inspected a woman with the very centre and force of [its] glance'; feminine 'phenomena' have hitherto 'struck upon all his senses at wide angles' (*FMC*, XVII). Such specialized optical terminology establishes the objectivity of Boldwood's observational parameters and, once Bathsheba focuses his eye, he is trapped:

His eyes, she knew, were following her everywhere...Boldwood looked at her - not slyly, critically, or understandingly, but blankly at a gaze...as something foreign to his element, and but dimly understood. To Boldwood women had become remote phenomena...comets of...uncertain aspect, movement, and permanence. (ib.)

The epithets imputing moral evaluation belonging to Troy ('slyly' and 'critically') and Oak ('understandingly' as in 'excessively knowing') are alien manners to the untutored eye of the farmer, and for one whose desires are displaced and confused, this awkward, distanced voyeurism substitutes 'visual familiarity' for sexual familiarity. This impotent gaze, passively recording what it 'saw' and 'noticed' about Bathsheba's physical features as a neutral inventory of geometrical constructs ('correct facial curves / roundness of her chin / side of her eyelids / shape of her ear'),¹¹⁷ abandons him to her active perceptual

¹¹⁶ Hardy first used this shocking image in *DR*: a setting sun so fires the purple heather and intensifies the colours that 'they seemed to stand above the surface of the earth and float in mid-air like an exhalation of red' (*DR*, II.4). Both fictional episodes anticipate a real experience of Hardy's: 'A letter lies on the red velvet cover of the table, staring up by reason of the contrast. I cover it over, that it may not hit my eyes so hard' (*EL*, p. 276; July 1888). This note stands as an objectified negative in the real world of the subjectively conceived red seal and the diseased retina. These appalling images underpin the most melodramatic blot of them all which brings the moral question into explicit, bloody view: 'the oblong white ceiling with this scarlet blot in the midst' (*TD*, LVI) scars the reader's inner eye and refuses to be forgotten long after the novel had been lain aside. Cp. *Spirit of the Pities*:

The object takes a letter's lineaments

...and on its face

Are three vast seals, red - signifying blood

Must I suppose? (*D*, 3.II.iv)

¹¹⁷ At this point it becomes possible to suggest the influence of Bain's tripartite theory of 'Visible Movements' on the perceptual construct of *FMC* (see 'Visible Movements', in *The Senses and the Intellect*, pp. 514-6). Bain offers a threefold division which seems to correspond to Ruskin's 'theoretic faculty', 'imagination penetrative' and 'aesthetic faculty' respectively: 'mathematical or regular movements, as rectilinear, circular...and all movements that can be geometrically traced; symbolical movements, or those used for arbitrary signs...; lastly, aesthetic movements, or all those that touch the sense of beauty' (p. 515). It is easy to trace Boldwood (see above for his 'geometrical' construction and perception of Bathsheba), Oak (he "reads" the enigmatic body/social language of Bathsheba) and Troy (he responds to Bathsheba as a beautiful figure) in this design. The similarity is neither tenuous nor arbitrary, for Bain gives the superior place, like Hardy and Ruskin, to the symbolical. It is the most literal and disinterested susceptibility (Oak's objective dispassion lets him "read" and interpret correctly), and it is neither influenced nor attracted by 'calculable regularity' (unlike Boldwood) or 'artistic beauty' (like Troy) (ib.). The 'cyphers' with which the symbolically-susceptible eye work 'require to be closely observed and literally compared with those previously known' (p. 516). Oak does this, and constantly re-evaluates Bathsheba's moral/perceptual progress with

onslaught, leaves him defenceless in the face of a practised viewer, and at the slightest optical provocation he is switched on: 'When Bathsheba's figure shone upon the farmer's eyes it lighted him up' (*FMC*, XVIII).

Oak's understanding of Bathsheba has been gleaned from 'connecting...signs' and 'conning the page' of her face' (*FMC*, III), but even he, in the light of new evidence, discovers that 'his readings of her seemed...to be vapoury and indistinct' (*FMC*, XXII).¹¹⁸ Though Boldwood also visualizes her as a text, his learning difficulty is so severe that he is as little able to decode her corporeal semantics as her hand-writing on the card; Oak has to tell him. Yet this incompetence is dangerously re/de-constructive. Walking in on the sheep-shearing, his clumsy mis-reading of the situation alters Bathsheba's visual estate:

They were aware of his presence, and the perception was as too much light upon his new sensibility...[H]e passed by with an utter...sensation of ignorance... Perhaps in her manner there were signs that she wished to see him - perhaps not - he could not read a woman. (*FMC*, XVIII)¹¹⁹

In chapter I, though her primacy was mediated by an unobserved observer who objectified her, Bathsheba was the focus of attention; this barn scene revises her. Before Boldwood's arrival, she is the unchallenged visual judge: she overlooks everything, she is the subject, the creator of the scene; but the instant that Boldwood's disruptive objectifications reduce her to an enigmatic text, her optical control is usurped and its power negated. Boldwood sees the 'signs' but is confounded when he tries to master their 'subtlest meanings', and his inconclusive pontifications expose the treacherousness of data gathered from visual observation.

what he has 'previously known' of her.

¹¹⁸ Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (1847), ed. Q.D. Leavis (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), employs the image where Jane and her suitors are concerned. Jane senses that St John 'seemed leisurely to read my face, as if its features and lines were characters on a page. The conclusions drawn from this scrutiny he partially expressed in his succeeding observations' (Ch. 30) which are empirically, almost systematically, acute and accurate, but which fail to take feeling into account.

¹¹⁹ Eliot acknowledges the difficulty for even the wisest of reading the beguiling language of love: 'Nature has written out his bride's character for him in those exquisite lines of cheek and lip...Nature has her language, and she is not unvarnished; but we don't know all the intricacies of her syntax just yet, and in a hasty reading we may happen to extract the very opposite of her real meaning' (*Adam Bede*, I. 15). Boldwood may be forgiven as an illiterate victim, but even Oak, despite his 'conning' glance, is himself "conned"/ deceived.

Far from the Madding Crowd is a model lesson in how experience modifies perception so that 'false' evaluations are minimized. Near the beginning, Oak witnesses the blank incomprehension of a new-born calf

looking idiotically at the two women, which showed that it had not long been accustomed to the phenomena of eyesight, and often turning to the lantern, which it apparently mistook for the moon, inherited instinct having yet had little time for correction by experience. (*FMC*, II)

'In the morning of our days...how false and inaccurate [are] the judgements we form of things?' asks Burke.¹²⁰ 'Instincts are not always absolutely perfect and are liable to mistakes,' replies Darwin.¹²¹ Hardy's answer suggests mis-perception is total, and that inadequate perceptual tendencies ('looking idiotically'), errors in judgement ('mistook for the moon'), and defective vision ('inherited instinct' akin to Bathsheba's 'prescriptive infirmity') must all undergo radical 'correction' by the great teacher, 'experience'.¹²² Confronting the polemic surrounding the empirical basis of the evolution of perceptual process, this passage revises Newman's discourse on the acquisition of knowledge via perception:

Instinctively...we are ever instituting comparisons between the manifold phenomena of the external world...[A]s soon as we perceive them, we also perceive that they are like each other or unlike.¹²³

More particularly, Hardy's (moon-)calf, the equivalent of Newman's new-born lamb,¹²⁴ supports the argument that animals instinctively construct their visual faculties from 'the shifting shapes and colours of the visible world'.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, I, 65.

¹²¹ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (1859), ed. J.W. Burrow (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), Ch. VII: Instinct, pp. 234-63 (p. 263). This chapter considers the inheritance of habitual action, states that 'instincts [are] comparable with habits, but different in their origin' (p. 234), and suggests the probability of 'inherited variations of instinct' (p. 238).

¹²² And in this Hardy agrees with Eliot that higher perception and comprehension is acquired, 'as we learn the art of vision, by a good deal of hard experience' (*Adam Bede*, I, 15). He also extends the Lockean debate initiated in Book I of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. A.C. Fraser, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), 'Of Innate Notions', which addresses whether, firstly, there is any innate knowledge of principles, and, secondly, whether the "materials" of that knowledge, the ideas on which that knowledge is based, are innate. In Book II, 'Of Ideas', Locke argues that the answer to the question of the source of our ideas is 'in one word, from experience', which can be furnished either by sensations, by which the senses 'from external objects convey into the mind what produces there those perceptions', and reflection, 'the perception of the operations of our own mind within us' (see Book II. i. 3-4).

¹²³ Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, p. 30. Burke says that 'it is by imitation far more than by precept, that we learn everything' (*A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, I, 83).

¹²⁴ And Bain's 'newly-dropped calf': 'INSTINCT is defined as the *untaught* ability to perform certain actions of all kinds...[A] living being possesses, at the moment of birth, powers of acting of the same nature as those subsequently conferred by experience and education. When a newly-dropped calf stands up, walks, and sucks the udder of the cow, we call the actions instinctive' ('The Instincts', in *The Senses and the Intellect*, pp. 265-332 (p. 264)).

¹²⁵ Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, p. 110

[It is by instinct]...that brutes understand the real unities, material and spiritual, which are signified by the lights and shadows, the brilliant ever-changing kaleidoscope...which plays upon their *retina*...This perception of individual things amid the maze of shapes and colours which meets their sight, is given to brutes in large measures, and that, apparently, from the moment of their birth.¹²⁶

Newman dismisses without reservation an empirical dimension to perception/understanding, conceiving it rather as the perceiver's recognition of specifics among generalities, a consequence of 'the dictate of conscience'.¹²⁷ Stephen, extending the theological ramifications of the debate, draws a disparate analogy between the use of facts in convincing the blind and the infidel of their deficient sight, whether it be for material or transcendental objects. Unlike the blind man, the unbeliever 'cannot be confuted...by any summary appeal to facts; for the facts to which the theologian appeals are beyond all verification by experience'.¹²⁸ Newman's 'dictate of conscience' and Stephen's 'verification by experience' merge in Hardy's response: the calf possesses an obscure yet 'inherited instinct' or apprehension, a constitutional knowledge or idea about the world. And in his last letter to Humboldt, Goethe wrote, 'The Ancients said that the animals are taught through their organs; let me add to this, so are men, but they have the advantage of teaching their organs in return'.¹²⁹ In the Hardy alternative, 'experience *un-teaches*' (*EL*, p. 231; Dec 1885) this germinal comprehension of things, and even if Boldwood remains as 'blankly at a gaze' throughout, Bathsheba's 'prescriptive infirmity', though immune to being '*un-taught*', is forced into line with the moral standard. In fact, her fully matured sensibility is so sound that it has 'the effect of setting the distorted images in each mind present into proper focus' (*FMC*, LIV).

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111. Newman examines the nature of belief, and argues that we reach certainties not through logic but through intuitive perception; the real universe is not logical, and the premises of logic are not realities but assumptions. Cp. Bain's consideration of stereoscopic vision: 'The theory of the stereoscope...must...be supplemented by the assumption of a long course of experience, - education, it may be, assisted by evolution, - whereby we habitually disregard the actual sensation of the moment' and instead regard it as 'a consequence of innumerable experiments carried on during our lifetime, and possibly assisted by heredity' ('Sense of Sight', p. 245). See also Hume's *Enquiries*, 'Of the Reason of Animals', pp. 104-8.

¹²⁷ Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, pp. 111-2.

¹²⁸ Stephen, 'Newman's Theory of Belief', p. 232.

¹²⁹ Goethe to Wilhelm von Humboldt, March 17, 1832. Cp. Blake: 'The desires & perceptions of man untaught by any thing but organs of sense, must be limited to objects of sense' ('There Is No Natural Religion' (1788), [a] VI, in *The Complete Writings of William Blake, with Variant Readings*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966)). This treatise is dedicated to overcoming the theory that humanity is, or should be, limited to what it perceives through the senses. The revolutionary idea is that human desires become unlimited as the senses expand, a premise which Hardy seems to explore more fully in *JO*.

'The shifting shapes and colours of the visible world'¹³⁰ provide a kaleidoscopic reality of light and dark; tonal fluctuations bombard the senses and, in a novel where so much depends on seeing clearly, one wonders why Hardy conspires so actively against his characters.¹³¹ The method confuses and deceives and has the power to reverse the natural order, Boldwood's disfiguring 'blot of blood' hurling his delicately balanced world into chaos, 'the preternatural inversion of light and shade...casting shadows in strange places, and putting lights where shadows had used to be' (*FMC*, XIV). Moderate light, signifying correct morality and clear perception, illuminates and clarifies, but 'a thousand rays [are] strong enough to blind a weak-eyed man' (*FMC*, XXIII). Light also confesses hidden truths as when Oak sees Bathsheba in 'the cold morning light of open- shuttered disillusion' (*FMC*, XX), and she admits to her trivial regard for Boldwood during 'her noon-clear sense' (*FMC*, XXXI). Darkness is similarly ambivalent, for while it hinders clear-sightedness and obfuscates less pleasant realities, it directs the eye to the most significant matters and excludes the superfluous or distracting. The thick blackness enveloping the great storm is 'impenetrable by the sharpest vision' (*FMC*, XXXVII), but it is during the 'incessant light...and...shimmer of the dying lightning' flashes of metaphorical insight that Bathsheba's consciousness opens to Oak's true value. The blackness also encourages her to articulate her moral confusion over marrying Troy - "he had that day seen a woman more beautiful than I" - and calls forth her plea, "Now do you see the matter in a new light?" Panic over Frank's perceptual/ ethical / aesthetic weakness forced the issue.

Two scenes in particular illustrate the moral potential of this antagonism and teach the danger of forming opinions on the arbitrariness of ocular proof; in both, as Bullen appreciates, 'there is no rigid distinction between watching as an act of pure sensation and observation as a form of moral discrimination'.¹³² The first describes the preliminary encounter of the two egoists and takes place at night. 'Watching is best done invisibly' (*FMC*, XXIV), the narrator interpolates, and Bathsheba, reassuming the role of

¹³⁰ Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, p. 110.

¹³¹ Bullen, *The Expressive Eye*, p. 82, notes that at least thirty-one of the fifty-seven chapters are set in total or partial obscurity. On light, and darkness as an inducer of terror, see Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, I, 155-60.

¹³² J.B. Bullen, *The Expressive Eye*, p. 75.

observed observer, carries the 'dark lantern' testifying her perceptual incompetence which is exacerbated by the impenetrable 'density' of the wooded region in which it has to operate.¹³³ It is right that 'the meeting should...occur in the darkest point of her route' (*FMC*, XXIV), and only when the disembodied hand has 'seized' the light source and released its power does its owner make his spectacular appearance,

brilliant in brass and scarlet...His sudden appearance was to darkness what the sound of a trumpet is to silence. Gloom, the *genius loci* at all times hitherto, was now totally overthrown, less by the lantern-light than by what the lantern lighted. (ib)

This theatrical entrance reinforces the anti-realistic air and leaves the audience - reader, narrator, and Bathsheba - optically stunned by the anti-hero's, not the lamp's, preternatural refulgence. Moreover, his hue is a visual expression of his effect: 'red is fiery, pungent, or exciting...[T]he occurrence of red is a lively stimulation', and the pleasure Bathsheba derives from looking at him 'may be owing to novelty and contrast'.¹³⁴ Troy is a 'newly-discovered shade of colour' (Oak occupies what Bain nominates as the unexciting blue end of the spectrum),¹³⁵ and excess accounts for much of the colour's/Troy's fatal attraction. As Bain explains, 'in the presence of a light too strong to be agreeable, the eye is worked upon, as by a spell or fascination, and we continue gazing on what gives pain or discomfort.'¹³⁶ Bathsheba's eyes are so painfully enchanted that Troy's melodramatic appearance strikes her as a 'fairy transformation', but the reader (for whom the view is dimmed by being filtered through the narrative eye) sees the ironic discrepancy as the light casts 'over half the plantation gigantic shadows of both man and woman, each dusky shape becoming distorted and mangled upon the tree-trunks till it wasted to nothing' (*FMC*, XXIV). This progression from the fantastic to the whimsical into nothing demystifies the reader's, but not Bathsheba's, vision of the real Troy.

¹³³ Though completely different in emphasis and intent, one cannot help connecting this symbol of moral blindness with the allusion to Bulstrode as an unappealing, and self-righteous, 'moral lantern' in *Middlemarch*, II. 13.

¹³⁴ Bain, 'Sense of Sight', in *The Senses and the Intellect*, p. 249.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 247-8. Bathsheba's ocular deviation from the regular course of the will (which is to pleasure, and from pain), marks her as the model of 'irrational beings' (p. 248); perhaps the forerunner of what Hardy labelled the Woman's 'prescriptive infirmity'.

The light which Troy's 'brilliant' red uniform 'rejects', not that which it 'absorbs' (*FMC*, XXIII), compromises Bathsheba's ability to see him properly and introduces a potent optical (it is seen) and moral (it is sexual) threat: 'when he looked hard into her eyes...Bathsheba looked down again, for his gaze was too strong to be received point-blank by her own' (*FMC*, XXIV). Miller indicates how in Hardy the 'direct encounter, eye to eye in open reciprocity, is often only the final stage before sexual possession in a drama of looks which begins with some form of spying or the look unreturned'.¹³⁷ Desire is mediated through the suggestive glance, and misalliances founded upon misperception dictate plot development. Troy looks with an erotic mastery symbolic of his virility, and, by regarding Bathsheba in this penetrating manner, interprets her as a visibly sexual object and casts himself as the exploitative observer.¹³⁸

Troy's overwhelming visual and sexual charisma is dramatized in that 'most unconventional picture',¹³⁹ the sword display. Though a 'piece of mad extravagance',¹⁴⁰ it ranks as perhaps the novel's most inspired moment of vision: the narrative eye's awed amazement matches Bathsheba's, and Troy's aggressive, uninhibited sexuality, far from volunteering a new moral assessment, confirms his unprincipled conduct. But ethical matters are subsidiary; swamped by the brilliance of this optical seduction, reason and right are blinded. 'Promiscuously' delineated, this palpably tactile environment exudes a vital, latent eroticism that Gabriel's sanctimonious prudery lacks,¹⁴¹ and is inflamed by Troy's arrival. Three times he is 'known by' the colour of passion, shame and moral misconduct: he enters as 'a dim spot of artificial red', performs as 'a scarlet haze', and withdraws as a 'scarlet form' (*FMC*, XXVIII). In addition, Troy is never 'dull' in any sense; he shines, radiating the characteristic '*sparkle*' of lustrous bodies: 'the pleasure of

¹³⁷ Hillis Miller, *Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire*, p. 120.

¹³⁸ Such suggestive and possessive staring can be usefully compared with Eliot's rendition of Stephen Guest's burning passion for Maggie. At the dance at Park House he is repeatedly shown in the act of visually penetrating her: 'his eyes were devouring Maggie...Something strangely powerful there was in the light of Stephen's long gaze, for it made Maggie's face turn toward it and look upward at it...And they walked on...without feeling anything but that long grave mutual gaze which has the solemnity belonging to all deep human passion' (*The Mill on the Floss* (1860), ed. A.S. Byatt (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), VI. 10).

¹³⁹ Anon., *Saturday Review*, XXXIX (Jan 9, 1875), 57-8; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 95-100 (I, 97).

¹⁴⁰ Anon., *Westminster Review*, CLII n.s. XLVII (Jan 1875), 265; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 87-90 (I, 88).

¹⁴¹ This technique, the creation of erotic landscapes, was not monopolized by Hardy, and he was probably familiar with it as used by Tennyson, in 'Oenone' (1832). Here Tennyson places his 'Naked' (line 94) goddesses behind a suggestive trellis-work of 'wandering ivy and vine' (line 98). As Christopher Ricks, *Tennyson* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1972), notes, an earlier critic's (J.W. Croker) comments reveal something important: 'as Croker details the "luxuriant" natural descriptions, it almost dawns on him too that a luxur is a lecher' (p. 87). This is just as applicable to this scene in *FMC* as well as the famous garden scene in *TD*. Ricks goes on to explain that erotic landscapes are effective and feasible given the powerful and persistent tradition of, firstly, speaking of Nature as a mistress, and, secondly, speaking of a mistress as Nature (ib.). Shakespeare's 'Venus and Adonis' (1592) offers an earlier example of passionate love-making in topographical terms.

lustre is greater than the pleasure of colour alone...The highest beauty of visible objects is obtained by lustre. The metals...are recommended by it',¹⁴² and in this instance the pervasive dream-like quality of the episode owes much to Troy's conspicuous lack of a physical body; he makes his impression as a luminous power surge, an energized presence 'as quick as electricity' which demonstrates its prowess 'quicker than lightning'. Only the mesmerizing sword, his naked weapon, is ever 'like a living thing', its intermittent flashes suggesting 'a sort of greeting',¹⁴³ and the incongruous combination of 'yielding' grass and violent metallicism, of real and fantastic, creates an atmosphere so charged with 'tumultuous feelings' that Bathsheba is numbed into an easy submission.

The transcendent, hypnotic climax perpetuates a new heaven and earth. This recreation of creation may be naturalized by the figurative presence of sparkling phenomena - a 'rainbow',¹⁴⁴ 'lightning', a 'firmament of light', or 'a sky-full of meteors' - but the 'luminous streams of this *aurora militaris*' betray its threatening artificiality.¹⁴⁵ As Steel remarks of this vigorous, euphemistic assault, 'the sexual images, rampant throughout, are not loving but actively hostile; this is a figurative rape'.¹⁴⁶ The fantastic unreality of the combat, circumscribed by a magical 'arc of silver' (or a very real sword) and 'a sort of rainbow upside down in the air' (*FMC*, XXVIII), throws ordering principles - reality, morality and perception - into chaos. Oblivious to the moment's moral import, Bathsheba is left disoriented within the 'circling gleams' and as emotion

¹⁴² Bain, 'Sense of Sight', in *The Senses and the Intellect*, p. 250.

¹⁴³ Troy's symbol is the sword, Boldwood's the gun (both are hunters/predators), and Oak (as protector) has the sheep-crook. Yet Oak is just as capable of metaphorical woundings: he sharpens his shears 'somewhat as Eros is represented when in the act of sharpening his arrows' (*FMC*, XX), and later cuts the sheared ewe with the blades. See Richard Carpenter, 'The Mirror and the Sword: Imagery in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, XVII (March 1964), 331-45; and Linda M. Shires, 'Narrative, Gender, and Power in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *Novel*, 24:2 (1991), 162-77, who stresses the euphemistic significance of 'weapons'. The most expressly violent use made of this phallic substitute is by Festus Derriman who, in seeking to force entry into the house, reveals the overtly sexual nature of his desires. His desperate act synthesizes the wish for penetration and the fear of castration: 'peeping over the window-sill, [Anne] saw her tormentor drive his sword between the joints of the shutters, in an attempt to rip them open. The sword snapped off in his hand' (*TM*, XXVII).

¹⁴⁴ The rainbow figure most often refers to love. Here the bow dissolves into a violently circumscribed *aurora militaris*, but in *RN* it is Eustacia's 'perfidious imagination' which conjures up the delusive dream-vision in which she and her shining knight dive into a heath pool and surface 'somewhere beneath an iridescent hollow, arched with rainbows' (*RN*, 2.III). Cp. Shelley's 'Alastor' (1816), in *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1905; rpt. 1961):

...Does the bright arch of rainbow clouds,
And pendant mountains seen in thy calm lake,
Lead only to a black and watery depth...? (lines 234-6)

See also Fitzpiers's use of the metaphor in *W* in which Hardy subjects the image to a more philosophical inquiry.

¹⁴⁵ It may also obliquely allude to the portentous coruscation of arms in the heavens noticed by Lucan. The image also appears in Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*: Lucy Snowe remembers 'a night when the aurora borealis was streaming and sweeping round heaven...I had paused to watch that mustering of an army with banners - that quivering of serried lances' (Ch. XXVI).

¹⁴⁶ Steel, *Sexual Tyranny*, p. 37. Boumelha, *Thomas Hardy and Women*, also focuses on this episode's hostility, as well as Troy's whipping of the horse, and Oak's wounding of the sheep. Each of the abused animals is seen as a surrogate for Bathsheba. I suggest that the horse-beating prefigures Alec's comparable treatment of his own animal, and Fitzpiers' abuse of Grace's Darling: each beast is a substitute for a "ridden" woman.

overwhelms thought, Troy's radiance materializes in a physical 'brand', a kiss, which, innocent enough in itself, triggers an awful self-consciousness and brings 'the blood beating into her face'. Reaping the results of Oak's perceptual/ethical legacy, her interpretation of a natural action as sordid and guilt-ridden issues from that 'dictate of conscience':

No fear is felt by anyone who recognizes that his conduct has not been beautiful...but, if he has been betrayed into any kind of immorality, he has a lively sense of responsibility and guilt...of distress and apprehension...of compunction and regret, though in itself it be most pleasurable.¹⁴⁷

Her enjoyment of the sensation which 'set her stinging as if aflame' becomes itself an accusatory admonition: 'she felt like one who had sinned a great sin' (ib.).

Both occurrences delineate the primitiveness of Bathsheba's moral eye, the breakthrough coinciding with her emotional prostration in the swamp. The cumulative effect of the prophetic clouds looming as 'a sudden overgrowth of atmospheric fungi' over the progress of Poorgrass with Fanny's corpse, and 'the fog and gloom' of an atmosphere envisaged as 'an eye suddenly struck blind', precipitates a quasi-subjective obscurity in which trees are 'indistinct, shadowless, and spectre-like in their monochrome of grey' (*FMC*, XLII). This blurring of the boundary between noumenal and phenomenal accesses a higher reality, but Poorgrass is attuned only to the superficial, Gothic provenance; it is the narrative eye which attends to the insubstantial. Possessing little 'strength of eye', Poorgrass further weakens his condition by drinking, inebriation synonymous with being at one's 'blindest' (*FMC*, VI), yet instead of seriously jeopardizing the ethical basis of the community, this 'multiplying eye' (*FMC*, XLII) indirectly awakens Bathsheba.

Though Hardy's scepticism regarding the correction of Bathsheba's 'moral retina' remains, something does happen in the swamp. But rather than the expected exposition of the heroine's self-searching determination to mend her ways, we are presented with 'A Reaction' (*FMC*, XLIV). Thus Babb's arguments that Nature functions as 'a moral agent' (when Nature in Hardy is invariably amoral), and that Bathsheba 'has found refuge from

¹⁴⁷ Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, p. 108.

Troy in nature and been morally regenerated by that world',¹⁴⁸ are debatable. Psychologically devastated by Troy's taunts, Bathsheba escapes, yes, but into an objectification of her essential despair. The 'damp fog' exists in two simultaneous realities as mental and physical perception are obliterated, and the obscuring haze pre- empts Bathsheba's dissolution into semi-awareness as she drifts into 'partial sleep' (ib.).¹⁴⁹ The arrival of dawn is an iconic moment of vision as, by a stroke of genius, Hardy dramatizes, rather than exposes, a fundamental ethical development: Bathsheba's first thought is not of herself but of the creatures around her in imitation of the sequence prefacing the 'preliminary moral Act' of Carlyle's *Teufelsdröckh*:

Here, then, as I lay in that CENTRE OF INDIFFERENCE; cast...into a healing sleep, the heavy dreams rolled gradually away, and I awoke to a new Heaven and a new Earth. The first preliminary moral Act, Annihilation of Self...and my mind's eyes were now unsealed.¹⁵⁰

The episode is a moral allegory, the 'dark road' (*FMC*, XLIV) and the overgrown thicket to which it leads, standing as displaced images of Bathsheba's first meeting with Troy and the subsequent sword-display. Hardy may have staged this scene in the place of Bathsheba's original Fall to offer an ironic perspective on events, but there is also an implicit suggestion that enlightenment needs to be accompanied by a repetition of the original misdemeanour, as the dislocated visual correlations show. Colour, expressing awareness of Troy's inherent disingenuousness and the ephemeral shallowness of her own fantasies in the light of everyday, is especially revelatory, the 'lurid' hue of her previous aspirations being as easily dispelled as the 'clinging...red and yellow leaves' which flutter off her 'like ghosts'. The 'yellowing ferns', though dying, are 'beautiful' to

¹⁴⁸ Howard Babb, 'Setting and Theme in *Far from the Madding Crowd*', *English Literary History*, XXX (1963), 147-161 (pp. 149, 160).

¹⁴⁹ The fatal chapter XI in *TD* follows the same imagistic pattern: excitement, darkness and fog, and sleep beneath trees as the climax approaches.

¹⁵⁰ Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus: The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh* (1832; London: Chapman & Hall, 1870), Bk. II. Ch. IX. And, as the narrator comments, 'In the worst attacks of trouble there appear to be always a superficial film of consciousness which is left disengaged and open to the notice of trifles', and Bathsheba is left 'faintly amused' by the method of the passing child regarding his catechism. Children are important as "messengers" in the novels (see John H. Schwarz, 'Hardy's Children', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 23 (1996), 21-8; Joanna Gibson, 'Children as Messengers in Thomas Hardy's Fiction and Poetry', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 23 (1996), 29-43; Robert Pattison, *The Child Figure in English Literature* (Athens: George University Press, 1978)), and this episode can be taken in conjunction with the "message" of the choir at the end. Casagrande, 'A New View of Bathsheba Everdene', asks, 'What is to be made of Bathsheba's faint amusement at the boy's method? Does she take the collect seriously, if not the boy or his method?' (p. 58). Casagrande believes that the child may recall the child-like, bewildered Bathsheba of the previous chapter, or anticipate the choir children singing 'Lead, kindly Light'.

her gaze, and she responds to 'their feathery arms' here just as she was caressed by the 'soft, feathery arms' of those in the hollow. The conclusive visual connection is a glory extracted from the heart of something sinister. Troy's sword, 'raised into the sunlight, gleamed' (*FMC*, XXVIII); the plants skirting this depression are flags, 'the blades of which glistened in the emerging sun, like scythes' (*FMC*, XLIV).¹⁵¹

It dawns; she sees the past's falsity (memory) in the light of the present's truth (observation), and realities clash as the superficial beauty of this area is transformed, for, like Troy, it is a perceptual paradox challenging definition: though 'magnificent', 'the general aspect of the swamp was malignant' (*FMC*, XLIV), and Bathsheba is as hypnotized by the swamp's repulsive attractiveness as she was by Troy's display. The sublimely ugly is enticing and distracting,¹⁵² but the ambiguous imagery seems engaged in undermining the significance of the text at this point, for this noxious death-bed, the 'essence of evil things', is 'a nursery' of vital 'pestilences...great and small' which breathe and grow in the vicinity of comfort and health. And it is the vaporous exhalations of these deadly plants which expunge once and for all the romantic voice of Troy's sword: its 'sharp...hissing' is at one with the 'iridescent bubbles...hissing as they burst' announcing Liddy's arrival. This instant is Bathsheba's retinal epiphany, the maturation of her moral vision, her mastery of Ruskin's 'true taste'. At last she appreciates the absolute consequence of prosaic details existing anterior to herself for 'she never forgot the transient little picture of Liddy crossing the swamp to her there in the morning light' (*FMC*, XLIV). The phrase 'never forgot' subverts the moment's implied 'transience' and registers future recollections of the present image as an action that has already taken place. Cognitive processes, perceiving/understanding, are continuous and, in Hardy's epistemology, the perceiver learns as long as the moral value of the retinal impression is acknowledged.

¹⁵¹ 'Lustrous bodies have a mirror surface, and reflect the sun's rays in beams' (Bain, 'Sense of Sight', in *The Senses and the Intellect*, p. 250).

¹⁵² See Charles E. May, 'Far from the Madding Crowd and The Woodlanders: Hardy's Grotesque Pastorals', *English Literature in Transition*, 17 (1974), 147-58.

Yet an incongruity, originating in the absence of an authoritative perspective, emerges between the apocalyptic moral importance of Hardy's heavy-handed symbolism and Liddy's down-to-earth negotiating of these larger matters:

Although the focalizer is Bathsheba the rhetoric seems to be not hers but the narrator's: it is as if for a visionary moment the consciousness of the character were invaded by the consciousness of the observer.¹⁵³

When setting a scene, Hardy usually describes it as he, rather than his character, sees it. In addition, he employs an authorial omniscience whereby, unlike the objective, neutral omniscience of those writing in the early part of the century, he does not simply depict characters' subjective cogitations and states but interprets them too.¹⁵⁴ Inconsistencies abound. The narrator further problematizes his response by circumscribing it with images traditionally associated with golden pastoral, and by undermining the profound ethical importance of the picture through Liddy's straightforward approach: 'Liddy did not sink, as Bathsheba had anticipated'. Perhaps, then, the malevolence of the place is a figment of Bathsheba's overwrought imagination; or, as 'the eye brings with it the means of seeing', Liddy sees nothing evil because she has no evil preconceptions. Such a perspective would indeed push the episode right outside realism into the realm of moralistic allegory, but, most likely, the swamp possesses an intimate memorial and sentimental significance for Bathsheba. It has no such meanings for Liddy.

Hardy makes his point despite such formal inconsistencies: Bathsheba's moral eye and the knowledge it absorbs are regenerative but not rejuvenative. Her youthful vitality, 'quenched...without substituting the philosophy of maturer years' (*FMC*, XLVI), is irretrievably lost, the intensifying series of optical abuses brutally smashing the defence which has hitherto defined her response to life's adversities.¹⁵⁵ Yet by enduring and surviving this trial, Bathsheba is given the chance to recover along the lines of a conventional moral and perceptual resurrection that Hardy would not allow again. Even

¹⁵³ Carson, *Hardy's Fables of Integrity*, p. 42.

¹⁵⁴ See Norman Friedman, 'Point of View in Fiction: The Development of a Critical Concept', *PMLA*, LXX, (Dec 1955), 1160-80 (p. 1174).

¹⁵⁵ She is 'only a girl' (*FMC*, XXX) in the face of Boldwood's anger, with Troy her 'cool girl's voice' (*FMC*, XXVI) trembles; her love is as 'entire as a child's' (*FMC*, XXIX), and when she sees Troy kiss the dead Fanny, she exhibits 'child like pain and simplicity' (*FMC*, XLIII). The epithet is redundant after the swamp scene.

so, Hardy insists that both he and the reader are convinced of the tenacity of this perspective one last time. Bathsheba's visual nadir takes her into the blackest mental abyss possible, the night-time re-appearance of Troy converting her 'bright eyes' (*FMC*, XXII) into sightless, 'dark eyes fixed vacantly' upon the contingency of this being 'all a terrible illusion' (*FMC*, LIII). Perceptually paralyzed, she can retreat no further into Miltonic anti-awareness: 'She was in a state of mental *gutta serena*; her mind was for the minute totally deprived of light at the same time that no obscuration was apparent from without' (ib.).¹⁵⁶ Justice plays no part in the havoc wreaked by this annihilating perspective, and the precipitous moment - the death of Troy in Bathsheba's arms - is essentially reductive, her cradling of him in a moral, '*pieta*' gesture depriving her of visual substantiality. Now more voice than body, she is displaced; she is no longer the vain woman of the start, but the 'stuff from which great mothers are made' (ib.). In a single, deconstructive phrase, the gaze of the author turns her into some (m)other and her personality into the subject of the defining male look. Hardy sees 'Bathsheba' out of existence by destroying her mirror (Troy, in this case) and leaving her prey to an eye, an authorial absent presence, which perceptually "absents" her.

The cycle of visual confrontations takes a visible toll - 'her eyes are so miserable that she's not the same woman' (*FMC*, LV) - Oak achieves a pyrrhic victory, and the couple are reconciled with the words 'lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom'¹⁵⁷ echoing in the background as a reminder of their journey 'through bright times and dark' (*FMC*, LVI). The lines from Newman not only provide a sub-text to the narrative, laying

¹⁵⁶ Hardy was drawing on Milton's attempted self-justification of his blindness, explaining how his eyes look for the light of God in vain: 'So thick a drop serene hath quencht thir Orbs, / Or dim suffusion veild'. In one of his editions of Milton, Hardy came across the following definition: "Drop serene", or *gutta serena*. It was formerly thought that that sort of blindness was an incurable extinction or quenching of sight by a transparent, watery, cold humour, distilling upon the optic nerve, though making very little change in the eye to appearance, if any; 'tis now known to be most commonly an obstruction in the capillary vessels of that nerve' (*The Poetical Works of John Milton: A New Edition from the Text of Thomas Newton, D.D.* (1864), p. 65. Hardy's own copy of this edition is in the Dorset County Museum). For a note on Hardy and Milton see LN, I, 1144 n. Bjork explores the appearance of Miltonic concepts in the novels. See also Marlene Springer, *Hardy's use of Allusion* (London: Macmillan, 1983), pp. 57, 117, 134, 143, 156. See also Joan Grundy, 'Hardy and Milton', *Thomas Hardy Annual*: No. 3, ed. Norman Page (London: Macmillan, 1985), 3-14.

¹⁵⁷ Hardy noted how these words had helped him (*LY*, p. 45; Dec 1895). For a discussion on 'Hardy's Favourite Hymns', and the use to which this hymn is used in *FMC*, see Peter W. Coxon, *Thomas Hardy Journal* XIII:2 (May 1997), 42-55 (esp. p. 52). The children do not understand the words they sing, as Bathsheba appreciates, though she fervently wishes for their uncomprehending innocence. Casagrande, 'A New View of Bathsheba Everdene', regards the hymn as ironic because 'what Bathsheba overhears she cannot do' (p. 68), and he examines the episodes with the school boy and the choir children because, he contends, they are two crucial moments in her career' (p. 57). The phrase reappears in a completely different context in *Sons and Lovers* (1913). Mrs Morel is awaiting the return of her inebriated husband: 'On a doorstep somewhere a man was singing loudly, in a drawl: "Lead, kindly Light." Mrs Morel was always indignant with the drunken men that they must sing that hymn when they got maudlin' (1.1). Lawrence also uses the phrase in a disparaging context in the appropriately entitled 'Morality and the Novel', in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. E.D. McDonald, 2 vols (New York: Viking, 1936; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1961), I, 527-32. He refers to the 'great mischief of sentimental hymns, like "Lead, Kindly Light," which have helped to rot the marrow in the bones of the present generation' (p. 532).

bare 'Bathsheba's hard-earned perspective on herself',¹⁵⁸ but imply a benefit in forgetting the past and suggest 'expectation' as the only healthy attitude, a premise found in Comte: sanity and 'mental harmony' reign when 'subjectivity in a regenerated form [is] exercised on the future from materials of the past' (*LN*, I, 734).¹⁵⁹ Epistemologically, though recollections and sensations must be connected, the latter should be the most influential and distinct. The children's song, however, recalling the boy memorizing his catechism in the swamp, brings back a flood of 'crowding thoughts' and 'all the impassioned scenes of her brief existence seemed to revive' (*FMC*, LVI). Hardy's cynical inference that, 'as in the case with many women', Bathsheba's feelings are at the mercy of her whims, undermines the credibility and validity of this moral transformation. Morally inferior because of her sex, her wrongs are only rendered unimportant by the passage of time; they are neither forgiven nor condoned.

Yet, equivocal to the last, Hardy distinguishes between two sorts of hindsight, moral and sentimental.¹⁶⁰ Given the latter, excessive nostalgia blinds the indulging eye to the inexorability of change and so 'reminiscence' is a 'disease' (*FMC*, XXV) which stunts moral growth, hence the overhearing of Newman's 'remember not past years'. With the former, Hardy's lack of sympathy is evident given the ostensible ease with which Bathsheba casts off unpleasant memories, for it suggests a transience of feeling imbued with little depth or sincerity. From this angle, Hardy seems to insist on the educative benefit of reminiscence to moral and perceptual development. Neither an inconsistency nor a contradiction, this clearly differentiates between nostalgic yearnings and instructive recollections. Nevertheless, the distinction is made in vain, for it advises what Bathsheba cannot do, that is, make a totally new start: all she can do is prevent that (moral) masochism which would wed her to Boldwood or leave her a (sentimental) mourner for the rest of her days over Troy's grave. In the end, with the 'hard prosaic' love of Gabriel, Bathsheba does not need to be morally perfect or visually adept to love or be loved. Her

¹⁵⁸ See *LN*, I, p. 243.

¹⁵⁹ Comte, *System of Positive Polity*, III, 20.

¹⁶⁰ Cp. Dante Gabriel Rossetti: 'memory / Saddens those hours, as when the moon / Looks upon daylight' ('The Portrait', lines 39-41). Memory, as compared to the real moment, is a pale reflection of the real. It can either be learned from, or mourned over. Rossetti's philosophy seems completely dominated by memory: the power, which is not always positive or progressive, exerted by the past on the present and the future is all-consuming.

inconstancy and instability - and her essential unchangeability - thus give the lie to the myth of moral education through perceptual experience.

Near the beginning of the novel Hardy warns that 'in making even horizontal and clear inspections we colour and mould according to the wants within us whatever our eyes bring in' (*FMC*, II). Subjective conclusions reached on the arbitrary basis of physical observation are controlled and shaped by the perceiver's moods, character and psychological make-up; thus both the evidence and its evaluation are imperfect and untrustworthy. In 1873 Helmholtz discussed the paradoxical nature of sight:

the inaccuracies and imperfections of the eye as an optical instrument and those which belong to the image on the retina, now appear insignificant in comparison with the incongruities which we have met in the field of sensation.¹⁶¹

Hardy was familiar with the physiological and mental distortions which jeopardized the act of seeing and the resulting 'image on the retina'. Brought into an ambiguous existence by an ambiguous process, reality is made all the more complex, incongruous and indeterminate when the chaotic variable, 'sensation', is involved, and Helmholtz concludes his argument by offering that this ungovernable, unpredictable condition has been manufactured by Nature 'on purpose, in order to destroy any dream of...harmony between the outer and inner world'.¹⁶² Hardy may not have subscribed fully to such an idea in 1874, but it would underpin his ideology by the end of the century.

In *Far from the Madding Crowd* the worlds of (outer) action and (inner) perception are disrupted and prevented from exercising a co-operative relationship by the uncomfortable frequency of perceptual shifts and the introduction of multiple points of view. There is no single reality or proper perspective - some are just more potent than others at certain times - and by encouraging the formal accommodation of so many visual variations, Hardy invalidates his own authority. As a remedial contingency, the narrative advises emulation of Oak's empirical stance which is 'to gaze enquiringly and learn' (*FMC*, XLVI), or rather un-learn defective visual tendencies. Our visual acuity should be

¹⁶¹ von Helmholtz, *Popular Lectures on Scientific Subjects*, p. 269.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

sufficiently conscious 'of how the apparent might differ from the real' (*FMC*, XLVIII), of the ethical wrongness of 'self-beguilement', of accepting the 'artifice' of a 'false' vision when it is known to be such. Perceptual experience should teach us to depose that 'falseness or inaccuracy of conclusion' which is rife in a deceptive world and cultivate 'true taste' which is 'forever growing, learning...and testing itself by the way it fits things' (*Works*, IV, 60).

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IV

'THE INTELLECTUAL LENS':¹
SEEING, KNOWING AND CREATING REALITY IN
***THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE* (1878)**

Though his poetry and prose are permeated with an extraordinary visual quality, it is the element of subjective perception...that is even more powerful in the knowing of / creation of reality...Seeing for him is not a metaphor for knowing; it is a form of knowing...The whole world of human concerns seems to have passed through his imagination to become knowledge in the form of visual structures.²

In the most properly intellectual aspect - the bearings upon knowledge, - the superiority of sight is still more pronounced.³

Alone!-

On this charred, blackened, melancholy waste,
 Crowned by the awful peak, Etna's great mouth,
 Round which the sullen vapours roll - alone!⁴

Coming after *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Return of the Native* was something of a shock to Hardy's readers in form as well as matter.⁵ Opinions were divided. To some it was 'very French...[N]early all that is best in the novel is analytic and descriptive'⁶ showing that 'a passion for excessive realism...ha[d] taken a greater hold upon this essentially poetic idealist'.⁷ Others reprimanded the indulgence of personality at the expense of objectivism and labelled Hardy as one of 'those fashionable and self-opinionated artists who embody their personal conception of art in forms that scandalize traditional opinions'.⁸ *The Return of the Native* was denounced as 'internally artificial' and representative of the 'rising school of novelists, of which Mr Hardy is one of the

¹ J. Ruskin, *The Complete Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E.T Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: George Allen, 1903-12), IV, 36. Hereafter cited as *Works*.

² Sheila Berger, *Thomas Hardy and Visual Structures: Framing, Disruption, Process* (London and New York: New York University Press, 1990), p. xii.

³ Alexander Bain, 'Sense of Sight', in *The Senses and the Intellect* (1855; London: Longmans, Green & Co., 4th edn., 1894), pp. 22-59 (p. 248).

⁴ M. Arnold, 'Empedocles on Etna' (1852), in *The Poems of Matthew Arnold*, ed. Miriam Allott (London and New York: Longman, 2nd edn., 1979), Act II, lines 1-4, .

⁵ See Robert Langbaum, 'Versions of Pastoral', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 20 (1992), 245-72; rpt. *Thomas Hardy in Our Time* (London: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 64-94; see also 'Divisions from Pastoral', pp. 95-126.

⁶ W.E. Henley, *Athenaeum*, XIV (Nov 30, 1878), 517; rpt. in *Thomas Hardy: Critical Assessments*, ed. Graham Clarke, 4 vols (Sussex: Helm Information, 1994), I, 107-8 (I, 108). Hereafter cited as *TH:CA*.

⁷ W.P. Trent, 'The Novels of Thomas Hardy', *Sewanee Review*, 1 (Nov 1892), 1; rpt. *TH:CA*, III, 71-84 (III, 75).

⁸ Anon., *Saturday Review*, XLVII (Jan 4, 1879), 23-4; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 109-13 (I, 109).

ablest members, who seem to construct their fictions for themselves rather than for other people'.⁹

The Return of the Native confused the critics into a confused reaction, especially when it came to identifying its genre. Henley saw it ranking 'among the good romantic work of the generation', yet discovered in it 'a quality of inconsistency' which was 'rather apparent than real'; one minute he finds Hardy's strategy 'most artificial', the next he proclaims it most true.¹⁰ The majority referred to Hardy's provision of a meticulous inventory after the French fashion, but that this 'exaggerated and almost microscopical minuteness of vision' was recognized as 'very distinctly Turner-esque'¹¹ indicates how his unprecedented synthesis of the physical and the psychological not only blurred the boundary separating subjective and objective reality, but pushed realistic fiction in a totally new direction. Moreover, Turner's 'much decried, late-mad' (*EL*, p. 243; Jan 1887) renderings, though admired by Hardy, were anathema to the critics who dismissed them 'as insane as the people who admired them'.¹² Like Hardy, Turner was admonished for his imagination's 'uncurbed licence'¹³ and for approaching the phenomenal 'rather as a medium to be moulded and adapted according to his mood swayed him, than as an external reality' which he was obliged to 'reproduce and interpret'¹⁴ with complete fidelity.

In keeping with the current critical trend, *The Return of the Native* attracted its share of pictorial metaphors but, unlike its predecessors, these figures accentuated the *unreality* of the artefact. The work's faults 'would appear in the pictures of a person who has a keen eye for the picturesque without having learnt to draw',¹⁵ and because of the

⁹ Ibid. This view provided T.S. Eliot's twentieth-century repudiation with an established history: 'The work of Thomas Hardy represents...a powerful personality uncurbed by institutional attachment or by submission to any objective beliefs...He seems to me to have written as nearly for the sake of 'self-expression' as a man well can' (*After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy* (London: Faber, 1934), p. 54).

¹⁰ W.E. Henley, *Academy*, XIV (Nov 30, 1878), 517; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 107-8 (I, 107).

¹¹ Havelock Ellis, 'Thomas Hardy's Novels', *Westminster Review*, CXIX n.s. LXIII (April 1883), 333-64; rpt. *TH:CA*, III, 27-51 (III, 42).

¹² W.P. Frith's comment at the Whistler v. Ruskin trial of 1878. Quoted in *Works*, XXIX, 584.

¹³ W.G. Rowlinson, 'Turner's Drawings at the Royal Academy', *Nineteenth Century*, 19 (1886), 403.

¹⁴ Claude Phillips, 'Old Masters at the Royal Academy', *The Academy*, 31 (1887), 82.

¹⁵ Anon., *Athenaeum* (Nov 23, 1878), 654; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 105-6 (I, 105). The term 'picturesque' came into fashion in the late eighteenth century, principally to describe a specific type of scenery. The impact of such writers as W. Gilpin, W. Mason, William Payne Knight (*The Landscape* (1794)), and Uvedale Price (*Essays on the Picturesque* (1794)) on the sensibility and vocabulary of nineteenth-century writers was considerable. The 'picturesque' as defined by Price became a new aesthetic category to be added to Burke's recently established categories of the Sublime and the Beautiful (1757). Its attributes were roughness and irregularity. Although the excesses of picturesque theory became a popular target for satire, writers such as Mrs Radcliffe, Austen and Peacock contributed to the evolution of the vision which was inherited by Dickens, Eliot, Hardy and James.

artist's unorthodox response to externals, his illustrations are 'never so presented that the reader is able to accept them as true pictures'.¹⁶ And as deviation from traditional realistic prescriptions was inconceivable, Hardy was accused of having 'deliberately prepared disappointment for us in his method of treatment, if he aimed at making his story in any degree realistic'.¹⁷ But, of course, such was never his aim. Nevertheless, despite repeated refutations of realistic intent, an undeniable realistic vein is present however illusive its source, for Hardyan reality is best understood as a series of consistent inconsistencies. Though the images are bare and primitive, the conceptions are often only half-formed, while the imaginative life animating them persuades us to willingly suspend disbelief and accept these illusions as real because Hardy himself believes so wholly in what he records.

These impressions are subjectively drawn by a mediating imagination rather than issuing directly from actual experiences of the objective world, and in this alone *The Return of the Native* stands apart from *Far from the Madding Crowd*. But as we read *The Return of the Native* we are conscious of a contradiction: Hardy undermines the imaginative bias by insinuating the topographical reality of the area into the preface, and though the heath's absolute significance escapes the limited compass of human comprehension, even minimal knowledge is reached only when massive inconsistencies arise. Its ontology is simultaneously autonomous and precipitated from the perceiving mind, for when not observed directly, Egdon and its wildlife continue to exist as material realities. As the truly objective is unknowable for Hardy, Egdon represents the quintessential nihilistic enigma.¹⁸ It also seems to offer a working reference point for Bradley's discourse in *Appearance and Reality* (1893) in which he maintains that

a separate real, which is wholly self-dependent, must...fall entirely beyond our knowledge...[And] if the being exists outside of all knowledge, assuredly to us it can be nothing. And, if it knows itself as what it is, since it falls within itself, it so far is the universe...But if it known by another, then forthwith it cannot be self-existent, since this relation must clearly belong to its essence.¹⁹

¹⁶ Anon., *Spectator* (Feb 8, 1879), 181-2; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 114-7 (I, 114).

¹⁷ Anon., *Saturday Review* (Jan 4, 1879), 23-4; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 109-13 (I, 112).

¹⁸ This particularly Spencian concern is explored more fully in the chapter on *W.*

¹⁹ F.H. Bradley, 'The General Nature of Reality', in *Appearance and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co.; New York: Macmillan, 1893), Ch. XIII, pp. 135-43 (pp. 142-3).

Hardy, like Bradley, was fully aware of the complex difficulties of the epistemological/ontological conundrum as it concerned perception,²⁰ and Egdon, existing as a compendium of plural realities, anticipates and satisfies all of the hypothetical alternatives. It is simultaneously inconsistent and unified (it is 'a self-contradiction'²¹); it is both Unknowable (thus nothing), and Knowable (thus something); it is both similar to and different from the Whole or Absolute, and it is that very relation which turns the 'real' Heath into what Bradley would regard as 'an adjective of Reality'.²²

Hardy's literary aesthetic is motivated by such metaphysical and perceptual incongruities, and the eye which oversees *The Return of the Native*, Ruskin's 'intellectual lens',²³ fuses the empirical and the poetical even while it juxtaposes modern learning and primitive wisdom.²⁴ The work inaugurates the intellectual polemic which is revised in the final trilogy, yet retains a peculiar idiosyncrasy: *The Return of the Native* is the only intellectualized Hellenic novel to foreground the dialectic so (topo)graphically.²⁵ Concentrating on the exigencies of 'the irrepressible New' (*RN*, 1.I), this modern eye brings with it current preconceptions and prejudices which antagonize the creeds of an older, antithetical tradition. With this novel, 'a thick cloud - the cloud of modern, inherently problematic consciousness - falls across the horizon of Wessex',²⁶ and though an interrogation of contemporary psychological and philosophical concerns is not innovative,²⁷ the attention and expression the March of Mind receives is. After Pater, ancient ways of perceiving reality correspond to the bright vitality of the classical South; modern equivalents, on the other hand, find their approximate in the bleak northern prospect of Dureresque and Ruskinian imaginative extravagance. Intellectually engaged

²⁰ 'A mountain [or a heath] is, whether I happen to perceive it or not. This truth is certain; but...its meaning is ambiguous...You may either assert that the mountain always actually is, as it is when it is perceived. Or you may mean only that it is always something apart from sensible perception; and that whenever it is perceived, it then develops its familiar character. And a confusion between the mountain, as it is in itself, and as it becomes for an observer, is perhaps our most usual state of mind. But such an obscurity would be fatal to the present enquiry' (Bradley, 'Nature', in *Appearance and Reality*, Ch. XXII, pp. 261-94 (p. 275)). Hardy's enquiry thrives on this dialectic.

²¹ Bradley, 'The General nature of Reality', in *Appearance and Reality*, p. 143.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Ruskin, *Works*, IV, 36.

²⁴ The latter is often supernatural in orientation, focusing on the malign powers of witches and demons. For a full discussion, see Gayla R. Steel, *Sexual Tyranny in Wessex: Hardy's Witches and Demons of Folklore* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), esp. pp. 48-58. Hardy was later to distinguish between knowledge and wisdom when commenting that with the plethoric growth of knowledge simultaneously with the starting of wisdom...we seem threatened with a new Dark Age' (*LLE*, p. 56).

²⁵ See Lennart A. Björk, 'Hardy's "Hellenism"', in *Papers on Language and Literature: Presented to Alvar Ellegård and Erik Frykman*, ed. Sven Backman and Goran Kjellmer (Göteborg: ACTA Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1985), pp. 46-58.

²⁶ Irving Howe, *Thomas Hardy* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 58.

²⁷ Hardy addresses the problem of assimilating emotional and intellectual insights, however briefly, in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*.

by these antitheses, Hardy forwards his own contradictory response. Looking at reality through the era's intellectual lens, he works at the point where classical and modern, beautiful and grotesque, meet, exploits the indeterminacy of this ambiguous margin, and fuses Pater's 'Hellenic spirit', Arnold's 'modern spirit', Ruskin's barren mountains, and Durer's grotesque. Egdon is the result. And with it, Hardy subverted the received form of realistic fiction.

The heath has been described as 'the enduring symbol of Hardy's philosophy of art and life'²⁸ and the novel as 'the key to Hardy's mind and art'²⁹ because 'there is in it a sustained philosophy'.³⁰ Hardy's mind, art and philosophy were dark from the mid 1870s onward and Egdon substantiates this modern sensation, realizes the threat of 'a new Dark Age' (*LLE*, p. 56), and visualizes its specific intellectual colouring. The place is 'a Darkened Understanding' (*RN*, 5.II), a material abstraction of a particular thought process, for 'Perception, Knowledge, is a mental act. There is no possible knowledge of a world except in reference to our minds. Knowledge means a state of mind'.³¹ Egdon is that mental state, a representative of the modern thinker. From the outset, Hardy's anthropomorphic conceit that 'the face of the heath by its mere complexion' can alter the apparent time of day realizes that, like so many ineffable natural phenomena, its lugubrious and dismal colouring is more to be feared than enjoyed: 'It could retard the dawn, sadden noon, anticipate the frowning of storms scarcely generated, and intensify the opacity of a moonless midnight to a cause of shaking and dread' (*RN*, 1.I.).³² 'Titanic' Egdon's inspiration of awed terror in its beholders acknowledges Burke's *Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757), for 'the passion caused by the great and sublime in *nature*...is astonishment...with some degree of horror...Whatever therefore is terrible, with regard to sight, is sublime too'.³³ Moreover, the opening presentation of the panorama addresses

²⁸ Penelope Vigar, *The Novels of Thomas Hardy: Illusion and Reality* (London: Athlone Press, 1974), p. 125.

²⁹ Walter Allen, *The English Novel: A Short Critical History* (London: Phoenix House, 1954; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), p. 247.

³⁰ Anon., *British Quarterly*, LXXIII (1881), 342-60; rpt. *TH:CA*, III, 13-26 (III, 22).

³¹ Bain, 'Perception and Belief of the Material World', in *The Senses and the Intellect*, pp. 398-415 (p. 399).

³² It is possible that Hardy may have had Dante Gabriel Rossetti's 'The Stream's Secret', in *The Poetical Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, ed. William Rossetti (London: Ellis and Elvey, 1891), in mind here. Night falls, and

The glen grows heavy with some veil
Risen from the earth or fall'n to make earth pale...
Until the night-wind shake the shade like fear

And every covert quail. (lines 206-7, 209-10)

³³ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), in *The Works of Edmund Burke*, 8 vols (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854), I, 49-181 (I, 88). Burke's treatise was to put a new sort of emphasis on the sheer

Wordsworth's own 'The Sublime and the Beautiful' (1835), the 'sensation of sublimity' resolving itself into three component parts: 'a sense of individual form or forms; a sense of duration; and a sense of power...And power produces the sublime...as...a thing to be dreaded'.³⁴ It is a 'complex impression',³⁵ and to the modern eye it is terribly beautiful.³⁶

The intellectual lens is overwhelmed not with observable appearance but with felt significance, and only by experiencing the place 'precisely at this transitional' hour can anyone 'be said to understand...its complete' effect and explanation' (*RN*, 1.I). Only when most obscure does the heath solicit comprehension, and Hardy takes advantage of that 'point of twilight dimness when objects begin to be doubtful; they fail to reinstate the corresponding previous impressions, whereby their identity is made apparent'.³⁷ Only an acute 'sensitiveness of the eye' or 'familiarity'³⁸ with the phenomenon can approach its significance, and for the time being the reader is dependent on the doubly- privileged narrator. Hardy's twilight, nature's equivalent of the reverie and the margin of un/consciousness in man, may be predicated upon De Quincey's essay on Wordsworth's poetry published in 1845; its subject certainly parallels Hardy's own experimentalism in prose:

Twilight, again - who before Wordsworth ever distinctly noticed its abstracting power? - that power of removing, softening, harmonizing, by which a mode of obscurity excites for the eye the same mysterious office which the mind so often, with its own shadowy realms, executes for itself. In the dim interspace between day and night, all disappears from our earthly scenery, as if touched by an enchanter's rod, which is...expressive of temporary things.³⁹

terror of sublime phenomena. See Pauline Fletcher, 'Hardy: The Chastened Sublime', in *Gardens and Grim Ravines: The Language of Landscape in Victorian Poetry* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 224-46; W.J. Mistichelli, "'This Pageantry of Fear": The Sublime in Thomas Hardy', *Cahiers Victorians et Edouardiens*, 44 (1996), 85-109.

³⁴ W. Wordsworth, 'Appendix III: [The Sublime and the Beautiful]', *A Guide Through the District of the Lakes* (5th edn., 1835), in *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. W.J.B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, 3 vols (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1974), II, 349-60 (pp. 351, 356).

³⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 351.

³⁶ 'Where the beautiful & the sublime co-exist in the same object, if that object be new to us, the sublime always precedes the beautiful in making us conscious of its presence' (*Ibid.*, II, 350). In this light, the 'new' reader will initially experience the heath's sublimity, and this sensation will resolve into an appreciation of its beauty upon closer acquaintance.

³⁷ Bain, 'Feebleness of Impression', in *The Senses and the Intellect*, pp. 491-96 (p. 495).

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Thomas De Quincey, 'On Wordsworth's Poetry', in *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*, ed. David Masson, 14 vols (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1889-90; London: Adam and Charles Black, 1897), V, 234-68 (p. 261). There is also a similarity to the tone of D.G. Rossetti's 'Love's Nocturn':

Vaporous, unaccountable,
Dreamworld lies forlorn of light,
Hollow like a breathing shell. (lines 8-10)

And who after Wordsworth save Hardy exercised the same facility? The awesome permanence of this 'earthly scenery', this 'near relation of night' (*RN*, 1.I), is terrible because it materializes the mind's 'own shadowy realms':

Not chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
By help of dreams - can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us when we look
Into our minds, into the Minds of Man.⁴⁰

Hardy's external treatment of Egdon surfaces that subconscious, latent 'shaking and dread', for we all recognize behind the material Wessex a higher, nightmare reality, that primal 'home of strange phantoms' (*RN*, 1.I).⁴¹ In such passages Hardy anticipates Lawrence's attempts 'to make new feelings conscious'⁴² and responds to current ideas of a collective consciousness - 'a collective personality' (*LY*, p. 226; May 1922) - or racial memory over half a century before Jung. At night

it was found to be the hitherto unrecognized original of those wild regions of obscurity which are vaguely felt to be compassing us about in midnight dreams of flight and disaster, and are never thought of after the dream will revived by scenes like this. (*RN*, 1.I)⁴³

Quoting from Nietzsche's *Human, All-Too-Human*, Freud contends that

In our sleep and dreams we pass through the whole thought of earlier humanity... The first *causa*... occurred to his mind... In the dream this atavistic relic of humanity manifests its existence within us.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Wordsworth, Preface to *The Excursion* (1814), 35-40, in *Wordsworth: Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 2nd edn., 1936; rpt. 1974). And in his preoccupation with 'the Minds of Man', Hardy circumvents 'all the difficulties & errors which have attended' previous disquisitions on the sublime and the beautiful, namely that 'the attention of those who have been engaged in them has been primarily & chiefly fixed upon external objects & their powers, qualities, & properties, & not upon the mind itself, and the laws by which it is acted upon' ('The Sublime and the Beautiful', II, 357). (Like Hardy after him, Wordsworth is also concerned 'in what manner language and the human mind act and re-act on each other' ('Preface to Lyrical Ballads' (1805), in *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. Michael Mason (London and New York: Longman, 1992), pp. 55-87; Appendix, pp. 87-93 (p. 58).) See Andrew Enstice, *Thomas Hardy: Landscapes of the Mind* (London: Macmillan, 1979). One of the most terrifying and effective interior landscapes of Victorian poetry is Robert Browning's wasteland of 'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came' (1855), in *The Poetical Works of Robert Browning* (London: Oxford University Press, 1905; rpt. 1962). The landscape is not an external manifestation; it is frighteningly subjective. And as William Clyde De Vane, 'The Landscape of Browning's *Childe Harold*', *PMLA*, 40 (1925), 426-32, realizes, almost alone of Browning's poems, this 'depends upon, revolves about, and lives for the sake of the landscape'; whereas 'his landscapes are generally brief and entirely subservient to narrative and character... the landscape is everything here' (p. 427). Egdon is prose kin.

⁴¹ See Ernest Hartmann, *The Nightmare: The Psychology and Biology of Terrifying Dreams* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

⁴² D.H. Lawrence, 'The Novel and the Feelings', in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. E.D. McDonald, 2 vols (New York: Viking, 1936; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1961), I, 755-60 (p. 756).

⁴³ See *LN*, I, 747: 'The Individual Mind - represented in the Mind of the Race' (Auguste Comte, *System of Positive Polity*, trans. E.S. Bealey, R Congreve et al., 4 vols (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1875-77), III, 38-9), a record which seems to have been made around 1875/6.

As a precipitate and inducer of nightmares, Egdon identifies with De Quincey's 'original' or 'immediate and proximate cause of shadowy terrors that settled and brooded over our waking life'⁴⁵ and the Nietzschean perspective which sees the dreaming and waking states as equally significant, especially as the former affects conscious life:

What we experience in dreams, provided we experience it often, pertains at least just as much to the general belongings of our soul as anything 'actually' experienced...[I]n the brightest moments of our waking life, we are ruled to some extent by the nature of our dreams.⁴⁶

In the context of such phraseology, it is tempting to understand the heath as a Jungian 'archetype' which has its 'immediate manifestation in dreams and visions'.⁴⁷

A mind in which terror supplants reason is unable to rationalize such 'universal images'⁴⁸ and, consequently, redefines them surrealistically. Stephen argues that 'the ignorant and the childish are hopelessly unable to draw the line between dreamland and reality',⁴⁹ and the primitive psyche of children has, according to De Quincey, the 'power of painting, as it were, upon the darkness all sorts of phantoms'.⁵⁰ This tendency is buried within the subconscious of Johnny Nunsuch for whom 'the thorn-bushes...had a ghastly habit after dark of putting on the shapes of jumping madmen, sprawling giants, and hideous cripples' (*RN*, I.VIII).⁵¹ The real evil 'is not that the dreams sometimes take hideous shapes, but that all mixtures of dreams and realities involves distortion of

⁴⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All-Too-Human*, volume VI of *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Oscar Levy, trans. Helen Zimmern (Edinburgh: T.N. Foulis, 1910-13), Part I, S. 12; Sigmund Freud, quoted in *Psychology of the Unconscious*, p. 28.

⁴⁵ Thomas De Quincey, 'Confessions of an English Opium Eater', in *The Works of Thomas de Quincey*, ed. David Masson, 14 vols (Edinburgh: A & C Black, 1889; London: A & C Black, 1897), III, 433-4.

⁴⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, volume XII of *The Complete Works*, XII, 193.

⁴⁷ C.G. Jung, *Archetypes of the Collected Unconscious*, volume IX (Part i) in *Collected Works*, ed. Herbert Read et al., 20 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953-79), IX (Part i), 5.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, IX (i), 287, 4-5.

⁴⁹ Leslie Stephen, 'Dreams and Realities', in *An Agnostic's Apology, and Other Essays* (London: Smith & Elder, 1893; rpt. Bristol: Thoemmes, 1991), pp. 86-126 (p. 106).

⁵⁰ De Quincey, *Works*, III, 433-4. There is the distinct possibility of a De Quincey influence - see *LN*, I, 865-9 - regarding style. Hardy was also familiar with 'Confessions' as he refers to it in *DR*, 12.4. De Quincey never completed his psychological study of the faculty of dreaming in 'Suspiria de Profundis' (1845) and 'The English Mail Coach' (1849), in which he traced (a quarter of a century before Freud was born) how childhood experiences and sufferings are crystallized in dreams into symbols which can form and educate the dreamer's personality.

⁵¹ This imaginative transformation is characteristic of Abraham who, 'as he awoke more fully (for he had moved in a sort of trance so far), began to talk of the strange shapes assumed by the various dark objects against the sky' (*TD*, IV). Hardy may have been familiar with this childish tendency in *Oliver Twist*. With the burglary imminent, Oliver is taken at night through the countryside: 'Oliver sat...bewildered with alarm and apprehension, and figuring strange objects in the gaunt trees, whose branches waved grimly to and fro, as if in some fantastic joy at the desolation of the scene' (*Oliver Twist* (1838), ed. Kathleen Tillotson (London: Clarendon Press, 1966), Ch. 21). All three episodes can be usefully compared with Browning's 'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came' (1855). The nightmarish landscape and hideous cripple who directs the speaker touches a chord in all, and when Roland turns from the horrible scenery to his own mind, he finds the thoughts there even more grotesque.

facts'.⁵² And if Egdon is accepted as a distorted visualization of dreams and realities, then Hardy, borrowing from Wordsworth and De Quincey, pre-emptes the Freudian claim that 'the analysis of dreams will lead us to a knowledge of man's archaic heritage, of what is psychically innate in him'.⁵³

Egdon 'operates in a manner analogous to terror',⁵⁴ and though frightening in its implications, its expressive, atavistic barbarism is an integral part of the primitive and modern psyche, and knowing that everything in this bastion of the instinctive 'had been from prehistoric times...gave ballast to the mind adrift on change, and harassed by the irrepressible New' (*RN*, 1.I). Though the heath's 'ancient permanence' withstands the momentum of evolution, it is restrictive and isolating, and in certain areas 'the eye could reach nothing of the world outside' (*ib.*). Only when Egdon, solipsistically self-reflective and self-sufficient, activates the margin between primitive horror and modern reason does it 'appear slowly to awake and listen' to its 'true tale'; and once the heath begins this recitation, it displaces the perceptual and authorial dominance of the narrator,⁵⁵ the academic observer and relater of the scene. It perceives, and therefore creates, itself, and, for the time being, Hardy allows the environment its autonomy.

The land's 'watchful intentness' (*RN*, 1.I) defines 'the temper of the future', the mood of 'modern perceptiveness' (*RN*, 3.I) practised by 'modern man' (*RN*, 2.VI), and in the crucial progression from the 'sleep' of ancient memories into the consciousness of current facts, we witness the figurative 'awakening' from Pater's 'Hellenic spirit' into Arnold's 'modern spirit', a type of grand reflection willing to await 'the last crisis - the final overthrow'.⁵⁶ This ambiguous though ominous expectation may intimate 'the final overthrow' of ontological, theological and philosophical precepts established centuries ago, and Egdon's functions, to record and reflect subjective fluctuations, focuses this subversion; it is the model pathetic fallacy. 'It was at present a place perfectly accordant with man's nature - neither ghastly, hateful, nor ugly: neither commonplace, unmeaning,

⁵² Stephen, 'Dreams and Realities', p. 117.

⁵³ Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, ed. and trans. James Strachey (1953; rpt. London: Allen & Unwin, 1954), pp. 548-9.

⁵⁴ Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, I, 74.

⁵⁵ On the 'instability of narrative point of view' in this context see Phillip Mallett, 'Thomas Hardy: An Idiosyncratic Mode of Regard', in *A Spacious Vision: Essays on Hardy*, ed. Phillip Mallett and R.P. Draper (New Mill: Patten Press, 1994), pp. 18-32 (p. 26).

⁵⁶ Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (1873; London: Macmillan, 1922), alludes to the "modern spirit", with its realism, its appeal to experience' (p. 109).

nor tame; but, like man, slighted and enduring' (*RN*, 1.1). Such an observation vindicates Bradley's later claim that body and environment, Man and Nature,

exist necessarily with and for one another. And both, on examination, turn out to be nothing apart from their relation. We find in each no essence which is not infected by appearance to the other.⁵⁷

An intellectualized abstraction, this 'haggard' tract 'exhale[s] darkness', the metaphorical hue of *fin de siècle* cosmic pessimism, and 'appeal[s] to a subtler and scarcer instinct, to a more recently learnt emotion, than that which responds to the sort of beauty called charming and fair' (*RN*, 1.1).⁵⁸ The modern, intellectually-disillusioned mind challenges conventional ideas of beauty by nominating an antagonistic aesthetic, and 'perfectly accordant' with this trend, the defiant heath emanates 'a sublimity which spots renowned for beauty of the accepted kind are utterly wanting'. The reign of 'orthodox beauty' is nearing its end:

The new Vale in Tempe may be a gaunt waste in Thule: human souls may find themselves in closer and closer harmony with external things wearing a sombreness distasteful to our race when it was young. The time seems near, if it has not actually arrived, when the chastened sublimity of a moor... or a mountain will be all of nature that is in keeping with the moods of the more thinking among mankind. (ib)⁵⁹

Hardy may have been Wordsworthian in his feeling for nature, but his study of Burke and Darwin compromised his love for it, a situation which partially explains why Egdon's only absolute is its indeterminacy; it epitomizes the confused fusion of an emotional love of beauty and an intellectual love of science. Though Hardy began reading Burke's treatise while writing *Far from the Madding Crowd*, the literary potential of terror, power and vastness characteristic of the sublime is most pronounced in *The Return of the Native*. This is not to imply that Burke was a direct source or that

⁵⁷ Bradley, 'Nature', in *Appearance and Reality*, Ch. XXII, pp. 261-94 (p. 265).

⁵⁸ See John Marks, 'A Place Apart? Egdon Heath in *The Return of the Native*', *English Review*, 3:4 (April 1993), 2-4. Marks suggests that Hardy's anthropomorphizing of Egdon challenged Victorian readers to view humanity without hope, purpose or significance.

⁵⁹ Perhaps an inverted echo of Mary Shelley's Clerval, 'a being formed in the "very poetry of nature"' along Wordsworthian lines, who looks at the Rhine and its environs and pronounces, 'Oh, surely the spirit that inhabits and guards this place has a soul more in harmony with man than those who pile the glacier, or retire to the inaccessible peaks of the mountains' (*Frankenstein* (1818), Ch. XVIII).

Hardy purposely set about writing 'A Literary Enquiry',⁶⁰ but that his familiarity with Burke reinforced several important concepts. Hardy adheres to Burke's differentiation between the beautiful and the sublime,⁶¹ but whereas Burke approaches the latter as an alternative aesthetic, Hardy offers it as an anti-aesthetic; a significant gesture given the resurgence of interest in this dualism in the work of Ruskin and Pater. In the Preface to *The Renaissance* (1873), Pater addresses previous attempts 'to define beauty in the abstract...to find some universal formula for it',⁶² and indicates the flaw in the strategy's inflexibility: 'Beauty...is relative; and the definition of it becomes unmeaning and useless in proportion to its abstractness'. The true student of aesthetics should explain beauty in the most 'concrete terms',⁶³ and find 'the formula which expresses most adequately this or that special manifestation of it'.⁶⁴

Egdon Heath is Hardy's 'concrete term', his aesthetic 'formula', his 'special manifestation', and his methodological criteria respect Pater's primary concern: seeing the object as it really is in itself,⁶⁵ an insight which requires that the perceiver 'know one's own impression as it really is, to discriminate it, to realize it distinctly'.⁶⁶ But even more germane is the note Hardy made in 1907 from the topically entitled 'The Intellectual Fallacy':

A definition of beauty is an attempt to understand beauty by means of the intellect alone. But since our experience of beautiful things is not purely intellectual, we cannot express that experience in purely intellectual terms. (LN, II, 2519)⁶⁷

⁶⁰ Any more than his reading of Darwin incited a rewriting of *The Origin of Species*. Roger Robinson, 'Hardy and Darwin', in *Thomas Hardy: The Writer and His Background*, ed. Norman Page (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), pp. 128-50, is right in saying that Hardy 'provides not a version of Darwinism but a work made up of deeply felt responses to it' (p. 149). Despite the title, Kevin Padian's 'A Daughter of the Soil': Themes of Deep Time and Evolution in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XIII: 3 (Oct 1997), 65-81, offers a close analysis of Darwin's effect on Hardy, and addresses, however briefly, most of the major novels.

⁶¹ Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, published anonymously in 1757 with an 'introduction on taste' added in 1759, distinguishes between the sublime (with its associations of infinity, darkness, solitude, terror, and vacuity) and the beautiful (which consists in relative smallness, smoothness and brightness of colour) in a way which encouraged Hardy to reinterpret the distinction in the context of Victorian intellectualism. S.F. Johnson, 'Hardy and Burke's Sublime', in *Style in Prose Fiction: English Institute Essays 1958*, ed. Harold C. Martin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), pp. 55-86, forwards a persuasive argument that Hardy was intimately familiar with Burke's work. He contends that Hardy could have learned from Burke the literary effectiveness of injecting terror, pity, obscurity, power, vastness and infinity into his work. (see espec. 'The Sublime and Beautiful Compared', I, 141-2). Egdon is an embodiment of Burkean 'privation': 'All general privations are great, because they are terrible, Vacuity, Darkness, Solitude, and Silence' (*A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, I, 99).

⁶² Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (1873; London: Macmillan, 1922), p. vii.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. vii-viii.

⁶⁵ Also the principal tenet of Matthew Arnold's doctrine: 'I said: "Of the literature of France and Germany, as of the intellect of Europe in general, the main effort, for now many years, has been a critical effort...in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is"' ('The Function of Criticism at the Present Time', in *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*, ed. R. H. Super, 11 vols (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960-77), III, 258-85 (p. 258)).

⁶⁶ Pater, *The Renaissance*, p. viii.

⁶⁷ 'The Intellectual Fallacy', *Tribune* (March 1, 1907), p. 2.

Egdon not only receives Hardy's intellectual impression of Beauty, but contextualizes the source of that impression and the conditions in which it operates. Thus, 'a correct abstract definition of beauty for the intellect' is not a prerequisite for the critic; what is needed, and what Hardy supplies, is 'a certain kind of temperament, the power of being deeply moved by the presence of beautiful objects. He will remember always that it exists in many forms'.⁶⁸

The fundamental, creative presence of Hardy's 'more thinking', Pater's 'intellect', displaces the objective, quantifiable reality of the everyday by implicating the formative superiority of the conscious psyche. It is this element that counts; it is the sagacity of the modern mind which dictates the unorthodox appeal of the immediate reality, for, in true Blakean fashion, 'Where man is not nature is barren'.⁶⁹

The method of Boldini...is that of infusing emotion into the baldest external objects either by the presence of a human figure among them, or by mark of some human connection with them.

This accords with my feelings about, say, Heidelberg and Baden versus Scheveningen - as I wrote at the beginning of *The Return of the Native* - that the beauty of association is entirely superior to the beauty of aspect...Paradoxically put, it is to see the beauty in ugliness. (EL, p. 158; April 1878)⁷⁰

The Return of the Native addresses the question Hardy posed five months before he began writing:

If Nature's defects must be looked in the face and transcribed, whence arises the art of poetry and novel-writing? The art lies in making these defects the basis of a hitherto unperceived beauty, by irradiating them with 'the light that never was' on their surface but is seen to be latent in them by the spiritual eye. (EL, pp. 150-1; June 1877)⁷¹

⁶⁸ Pater, *The Renaissance*, p. x.

⁶⁹ W. Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793), in *The Complete Writings of William Blake, with Variant Readings*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 'Proverbs of Hell', line 69.

⁷⁰ The final clause originally read 'to see the beauty in so-called ugliness' (PNB, p. 221), the qualification being excised from *The Life* passage and consigned to the *Personal Notebooks*. The omission increases an already relative term's inclusivity and releases it from the constraints of traditional preconceptions.

⁷¹ The Wordsworthian allusion recalls that 'mighty world / Of eye, and ear, - both what they half create, / And what perceive', in *Tintern Abbey* (1798), lines 105-7. And in 1910 Hardy noted from Brock that 'the artist can make a beautiful work of art out of the representation of things not beautiful in themselves' (LN, II, 2388; A. Clutton Brock, *Shelley: The Man and the Poet* (London, 1910), p. 239). Interestingly enough, Lawrence addresses the same idea in *Sons and Lovers* (1913; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981). Paul, discussing his painting with Miriam, explains her liking of it 'because there is scarcely any shadow in it; it's more shimmery, as if I'd painted the shimmering protoplasm in the leaves and everywhere, and not the stiffness of the shape. That seems dead to me. Only this shimmeriness is the real living. The shape is a dead crust. The shimmer is inside really' (2.7). Hardy explores the existential ramifications of this concept more fully in *W*.

Hardy opposes the unmediated projection of mental impressions onto a blank world, and through the co-operation of imagination and external fact introduces something innovative into prose fiction. But the result is not an unqualified success: as a reflex action induced by a modern strain of disillusionment, it can limit the range available to the eye by shackling it to the lifeless extremities of things. Nevertheless, this strain of 'modern perceptiveness' reveres the terrible, unique beauty of all it sees and dispels the myth that attractiveness is an extrinsic quality.

Hardy no doubt encountered the idea of a double-visioned universe in Darwin, and, for Langbaum, 'the modern taste for the anti-aesthetic sublime becomes the post-Darwinian way of relating to nature'.⁷² Darwin postulates that our conception and comprehension of beauty is governed by present trends, and, in a passage added to the fourth edition of *The Origin of Species*, states that

the idea of the beauty of any particular object obviously depends on the mind of man, irrespective of any real quality in the object; and that the idea is not an innate and unalterable element in the mind... The idea also of beauty in natural scenery has arisen only with modern times.⁷³

Beauty, as an accidental not an incidental quality, is in the eye of the beholder. The revisionary intellectual lens of the 'modern time's' representative viewer sees into existence a reality far different from that of previous ages: Hardy is determined 'to see the beauty in ugliness' (*EL*, p. 158; April 1878), and Egdon is the awesome consequence of this antagonistic trend.⁷⁴

In the month that *The Woodlanders*, the most self-consciously anti-aesthetic work of the canon, was completed, Hardy noted that 'Nature is played out as a Beauty, but not as a Mystery' (*EL*, p. 242; Jan 1887), and subsequently claimed that 'to find beauty in ugliness is the province of the poet' (*EL*, p. 279; Aug 1888), however difficult

⁷² Robert Langbaum, *Hardy in Our Time* (London: Macmillan, 1995), p. 66.

⁷³ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (1859; 4th edn. 1866), pp. 238-9. The work went through six editions during Hardy's lifetime.

⁷⁴ See Richard Greene's 'A Musico-Rhetorical of Holst's *Egdon Heath*', *Music and Letters*, 73 (May 1992), 244-67, which explores the psychological aspects of music and relates Holst's opera to Hardy's novel. Andrew R. Deane, 'Holst, Hardy and a Heath', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XII:1 (Feb 1996), 62-72, contends that Holst believed music and the arts, particularly literature, to share an emotional affinity. Opera 47, *Egdon Heath*, expresses the conflict in the consciousness of its composer between the desire for solitude and the agony of loneliness' (p. 65). *The Planets* and *Two on a Tower* are also explored in the context of a profound subjective vision, yet against the abysmal immensities of space and heath, both Holst and Hardy find beauty, nobility and dignity in the human spirit.

he now felt this to be. In both *The Return of the Native* and *The Woodlanders*, Hardy equates Burke's sublime with the era's intellectualized vision, sees that its potential is not wholly positive, and recognizes its reductive appreciation of the natural world. The resulting model admits only bleak, emotionally-congruous examples, images which dramatize the disjunction between the 'obsolete...ancient' landscape and 'modern man', between the rearward south and the progressive north. In 1889, Hardy noted from Allen that

the Tropics are even now the rule of life; the colder regions are but an abnormal & outlying eccentricity of Nature. Yet it is from this starved & dwarfed & impoverished northern area that most of us have formed our views of life. (*LN*, II, 1657)⁷⁵

This northern bias informs the 'views of life' promulgated in the Hellenic novels. 'When the race was young', humanity delighted in its affinity with landscapes bathed in light and colour, but times are changing, imaginations reveal 'that weariness of the North (*cette fatigue du nord*)',⁷⁶ and the intellectualized aesthetic of northernness, the 'beauty in ugliness', is a new perspective creating a new reality:

Ultimately, to the commonest tourist, spots like Iceland may become what the vineyards and myrtle-gardens of South Europe are to him now; and Heidelberg and Baden be passed unheeded as he hastens from the Alps to the sand-dunes of Scheveningen. (*RN*, I.I)

Egdon sublimates the 'kind of landscape and weather which leads travellers from the South to describe our island as Homer's Cimmerian land' (*RN*, I.VI), a prospect to which, in keeping with Ruskin, Hardy assigns superior intellectual and moral status. In 1853, Ruskin finds a greater ethical integrity in 'the strong spirit of men' of the north whose eyes are 'dimmed by moor mist, or blinded by the hail';⁷⁷ in 1878, Clym's northern tenacity offsets Mrs Yeobright's vilification of Eustacia's southern extraction, evidence sufficient to damn her as 'a hussy' and account for her 'lazy and dissatisfied' temperament (*RN*, 3.III). Intellectually, too, the arctic is supreme, Venn's speculative observation of

⁷⁵ Grant Allen, 'Tropical Education', *Longman's Magazine*, XIV (Sept 1889), 479-88. This passage, given its date, bears most heavily on the effect of Brazil on Angel, but it is still a pertinent summary of Hardy's beliefs in *RN*.

⁷⁶ Pater, *The Renaissance*, p. 179.

⁷⁷ Ruskin, *Works*, X, 188.

the returned mallard with its 'amplitude of Northern knowledge' conducting 'direct communication with regions unknown to man' (*RN*, 1.X). This awful inventory of 'glacial catastrophes, [and] snow storm episodes' (ib.) assumes a different tenor by 1891: the 'gaunt spectral' polar birds which return to the 'homely uplands' of Flintcomb-Ash have 'tragical eyes which had witnessed scenes of cataclysmal horror' (*TD*, Ch. XLIII). Knowledge is a terrible thing, and though mankind instinctively strives to attain it, it is the unthinking creatures which see.⁷⁸

And Hardy, equally dissatisfied with the superficial splendour of a decadent Southern prospect, repeats Ruskin's reservations. Volume II of *Stones of Venice* (1853) attends to the physical 'contrast...between Northern and Southern countries',⁷⁹ setting the latter's delicate transience with its 'terraced gardens, and flowers heavy with frankincense', against the former's solidity, its characteristic 'wall of ice, durable like iron' possessing a persistence exclusive to 'the polar twilight'.⁸⁰ More pertinent still is the role of colour in the process of signification and identification. Whereas a survey of the south shows 'a great peacefulness of light...glowing with...masses of laurel, and plummy palm...with their grey-green shadows', the visual sweep north witnesses a change as 'glowing' colours dissolve into 'grey swirls of rain-cloud and flaky veils of mist' and the panorama opens upon 'mighty masses of leaden rock and heathy moor, bordering with a waste of gloomy purple'.⁸¹ In 'On Modern Landscape' (1856), Ruskin sees the nineteenth century as representing 'sadder ages than the early ones',⁸² and, equating image and idea,

⁷⁸ Although the arctic vision may have been inspired by Ruskin, the source of this awe and wonderment at the 'knowledge' found there is illusive. In 1876, when *RN* was being written, anonymous descriptions pertaining to 'the weird magnificence of the scenery' and its latent 'mystery' and 'excitement' appeared. What was common to such passages was the feeling that in 'the snowy wilderness lurks a powerful fascination' (Anon., *The Arctic World, Its Plants, Animals and Natural Phenomena*, p. 1). It is equally possible that Hardy was drawing on the arctic wasteland to which both heroes of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) finally retreat to die. At the beginning, Walton, the British Arctic explorer who chronicles the doings of Frankenstein, says, 'I am going to unexplored regions, to "the land of mist and snow"; but I shall kill no albatross...or...I should come back...as the "Ancient Mariner"' (*Letter II*). Hardy was familiar with Coleridge's *The Ancient Mariner* (1797), he alludes to it *LN*, I, 571, and *The Life* tells us that 'he loved' the poet (*EL*, p. 171; 1879), and may have recreated the crew's experiences in this mysterious land of 'mist and snow.../ And ice, mast-high' (Part I, lines 51, 53). The figure is used expressively by Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (1847), ed. Q.D. Leavis (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), to portray the barrenness of Jane's early life. The opening chapter refers repeatedly to Northern weather and books depicting "the vast sweep of the Arctic zone, and those forlorn regions of dreary space..." (Ch. 1). Moreover, this is Jane's first contact with "knowledge". It is certainly interesting to find Lawrence returning to this metaphor in a similarly intellectual context. Contemplating the pure physicalness of an African carving, Birkin speculates that 'it would have been done differently by the white races. The white races, having the arctic north behind them, the vast abstraction of ice and snow, would fulfil a mystery of ice-destructive knowledge, snow-abstract annihilation' (*Women in Love* (1921; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), Ch. XIX).

⁷⁹ Ruskin, *Works*, X, 186. *Stones of Venice* appeared in three volumes: I (1851), II and III (1853), and correspond to volumes IX-XI of *Works* respectively. On the question of influence regarding *The Dynasts*, see Charles Swann, 'Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice* and Hardy's *The Dynasts* - A Possible Debt?', *Notes and Queries*, 39 (June 1992), 187-8.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, X, 187.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*, V, 321. *Modern Painters* appeared in five volumes: I (1843), II (1846), III and IV (1856), and V (1860), and correspond to volumes III-VII of *Works* respectively.

holds that 'modern colour is on the whole eminently sombre, tending continually to grey or brown'.⁸³ No other 'modern colour' expresses Egdon's mood and meaning so precisely, and it is this 'gloomy' sentiment which Hardy exploits. In this aching age, 'chastened' and 'solemn' landscapes that are 'perfectly accordant' with the current 'issues' and climate are not the insufferable 'mockery' that 'a place too smiling for [man's] reason' would be (*RN*, 1.I).

Ruskin's metaphorical discourse on northern artists affects Hardy's suggestive literary strategy, and for both the greatest disparity between the two hemispheres lies in their aesthetic 'temper'. To substantiate his point, Ruskin draws on the 'exquisite chord of colour' in Scott's *Marmion*, praises the Romantic's 'love of rocks, and true understanding of their colours and characters', and says that Scott's difference from such as Dante is traceable to

the ruggedness of northern temper...then the really greater beauty of the northern rocks...then the need of finding beauty among them, as if it were to be found anywhere,...and, finally, the love of irregularity.⁸⁴

For Ruskin, the definitive feature of the 'modern landscape' is that it 'composes its imagery either of colour, or of that delicate half-believed life'.⁸⁵ Hardy, employing both tactics, dyes Egdon with a realistic yet subjective 'gloomy purple'.⁸⁶ By now it is axiomatic that 'we colour according to our moods the objects we survey' (*PBE*, Ch. 22), and Hardy oscillates between two tonal extremes, Egdon's intellectual and emotional reality ranging in 'pitch' and 'colour' from 'intensity' to 'gaiety' (*RN*, 1.I), from 'black' to 'purple' (*RN*, 1.I, 3.III).⁸⁷ The heath is a darkling landscape physically and psychically; a wasteland destroyed by science and philosophy.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, V, 349. See F.B. Pinion, 'Hardy and Scott', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, X:1 (Feb 1994), 71-6.

⁸⁵ Ruskin, *Works*, V, 349.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, X, 186.

⁸⁷ Much has been made of Hardy's use of these two colours. Donald Davie, 'Hardy's Virgilian Purples', *Agenda*, (Spring 1972), 138-56, claims that three poems in the the Poems of 1912-1913 sequence trace a movement away from Hardy's original allegiance to the 'purple light' of Virgilian romance in favour of mere realism. See also Tim Armstrong, 'Hardy's Dantean Purples', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, VII:2 (May 1991), 47-55; F.B. Pinion, 'Booby Cliff and Virgilian Purples', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, VIII:3 (Oct 1992), 86-89. In *PBE*, the prefatory allusion to 'the bloom of dark purple cast' which breathes from the cliffs anticipates the inland terror inspired by Egdon. A completely different effect of purple can be seen in *DR* which may reveal the origin of the 'purple light' in the passage describing the 'supremely happy moment' when hero and heroine first kiss: 'The "bloom" of the "purple light" were strong on the lineaments of both. Their hearts could hardly believe the evidence of their lips' (*DR*, III.2). This 'bloom' clearly originates from Thomas Gray's 'The Progress of Poetry': 'The bloom of young desire and purple light of love'. It is also used of Grace who is 'flushed by the purple light and bloom of her own passion' (*W*, XXIV).

And 'Science has a Hades from which it returns to interpret the world'. Bradley emphasizes that without 'the warmth and colour, the odour and the tones...Nature is a mere intellectual fiction',⁸⁸ but by 1893, Egdon, a considerable, not a mere, 'intellectual fiction' compounded of colour and tones, had existed as such for fifteen years. Interestingly enough, Bradley supports the notion that 'beauty' and 'emotional tone' are necessary 'to qualify Nature' where 'everything...without exception is "subjective"', and approaches the point where thought/intellect transforms the beautiful into the sublime: Nature's 'beauty and its terror and its majesty are no illusion, but qualify it essentially'.⁸⁹ Nothing could be more true of the heath, Hardy's own scientific or 'Tartarean' interpretation of the modern world.

In her study of Newton's influence on eighteenth-century poetry, Nicolson cites Addison's symbolical use of a heath to convey the reality of Newtonian science:

But what a rough unsightly Sketch of Nature should we be entertained with, did all her Colouring disappear, and the Several Distinctions of Light and Shade vanish? In short, our Souls are at present delightfully lost and bewildered in a pleasing Delusion.⁹⁰

But commensurate with the dissipation of the delusion, 'upon the finishing of some secret Spell, the fantastick Scene breaks up' and we wander around 'on a barren Heath'.⁹¹ And, as Addison continues, it is essential dissociation, the alienation of the Soul from the external world, which deprives phenomena of their significant colour:

the Ideas of Colours are so pleasing and beautiful in the Imagination, that it is possible that the Soul will not be deprived of them, but perhaps find them excited by some other Occasional Cause, as they are at present by the different Impressions of the subtle Matter on the Organ of Sight.⁹²

Addison assumes the reader's acquaintance with the Modern Discovery 'that Light and Colours, as apprehended by the Imagination, are only Ideas in the mind, and not

⁸⁸ Bradley, 'The Absolute and its Appearances', in *Appearance and Reality*, Ch. XXVI, pp. 455-510 (p. 493).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 493-4.

⁹⁰ Marjorie Nicolson, *Newton Demands the Muse: Newton's 'Optics' and the Eighteenth-Century Poets* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 149.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

Qualities that have any Existence in Matter',⁹³ and Nicolson explains how Newton's discoveries laid the groundwork of empirical philosophy.

In a similar vein, Whitehead's commentary seems to intimate Locke as the progenitor of Ruskin's 'pathetic fallacy':

The mind in apprehending also experiences sensations which, properly speaking, are qualities of the mind alone. These sensations are projected by the mind so as to clothe appropriate bodies in external nature. Thus the bodies are perceived as with qualities which in reality do not belong to them, qualities which are purely the offspring of the mind.⁹⁴

In itself, 'Nature is a dull affair, soundless, scentless, colourless; merely the hurrying of material, endlessly, meaninglessly'.⁹⁵ 'In reality', then, Egdon does not exist at all; ontologically, it is a felt colour, a pigment projected from the perceiving imagination, the absence of which would consign the place, in Arnold's words, to 'true blankness and barrenness, and unpoetrylessness'.⁹⁶ Meaning is 'In the Mind's Eye' (*CP*, 177) which 'dissolves the landscapes', and the formative excellence of the subjective in this creation and recreation of matter is a wonder to be celebrated.

More complex is the essential inscrutability of Egdon's objective reality, for this Carlylean Volume of Nature resists translation,⁹⁷ and although the visual reciprocity of perceiver and perceived, of reader and read, unifies the heath and combines the (incoherent) parts to make (coherent) meaning, its indeterminate text signifies all things to all people. Freire's and Donaldo's suggestion that reading the word is connected with reading the world,⁹⁸ and Wike's study of the 'legible faces' which function as imagistic secondary texts in Hardy's descriptions of nature,⁹⁹ reveal that the issue confronting the reader is two-fold: how to read the novel is only slightly less problematical than learning how to read the heath itself.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ A.N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World: Lowell Lectures, 1925* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), p. 55.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *The Letters of Matthew Arnold to Arthur Hugh Clough*, ed. H.F. Lowry (London, Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 126.

⁹⁷ This metaphor receives full consideration in the chapter on *W*.

⁹⁸ See Paul Freire and Donaldo Macedo, *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987).

⁹⁹ Jonathan Wike, 'The World as Text in Hardy's Fiction', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 47:4 (March 1993), 455-71; Dennis Taylor's, 'Hardy Inscribed' in *A Spacious Vision: Essays on Hardy*, ed. Phillip Mallett and R.P. Draper (Newmill: Patten Press, 1994), pp. 104-22, answers the question he sets himself near the start: 'Why does *The Return of the Native* have the most examples of imagery of the printed page?' (p. 107). An enlightening discussion on the different types of education available in the novel is explored by Simon Trezise, 'Ways of Learning in *The Return of the Native*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, VII:2 (May 1991), 56-64.

Personifying the 'modern perceptiveness' (*RN*, 3.I) which is 'fully alive to the beauty' (*RN*, 4.V) of Egdon's anti-aesthetic, Clym is among the 'few [who] cared to study the heath' (*RN*, 2.II) as a literary artefact. The wisdom imparted to the place throughout history generates a mutable historical record, and, as Johnson observes, 'to read aright this living palimpsest, requires a disciplined skill and a long familiarity'.¹⁰⁰ An innate affinity borne of constant, perceptual association empowers Clym to decode the cryptic tablet:

Clym had been so inwoven with the heath in his boyhood that hardly anybody could look upon it without thinking of him...If anyone knew the heath well it was Clym...He might be said to be its product. His eyes had first opened thereon; with its appearance all the first images of his memory were mingled; his estimate of life had been coloured by it. (*RN*, 3.I, 3.II)¹⁰¹

Hardy pursues Hume's experiential code, as it appears in *A Treatise on Human Understanding* (1739), that comprehension of our world is 'the effect of repeated perceptions',¹⁰² a consequence of habitually seeing certain things in close proximity: it is not 'from any other principle but custom operating upon the imagination, that we can draw any inference from the appearance of one to the existence of the other'.¹⁰³ In the *Enquiries* (1748, 1751), this correspondence, forged by 'Custom or Habit', permits the observer to infer 'the existence of one object from the appearance of the another'.¹⁰⁴ Perceptual familiarity lets us apply a 'continu'd existence'¹⁰⁵ to things not ordinarily having any logical connection, and it is this 'constant conjunction'¹⁰⁶ which ensures that Clym is remembered. In fact, the correspondence is so complete that physical absence jeopardizes neither the correlation nor the ascription of an identity to different, though associated things: 'even in these changes they preserve a *coherence*, and have a regular

¹⁰⁰ Lionel Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy* (1894; rpt. London: The Bodley Head, 1923), p. 91.

¹⁰¹ See Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876), ed. Graham Handley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), where the authorial voice forwards the belief that a human life 'should be well rooted in some spot of native land...a spot where the definiteness of early memories may be inwrought with affection,...spread, not by sentimental effort and reflection, but as a sweet habit of the blood' (Ch. 3).

¹⁰² David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature* (1739), ed. T.H. Green and T.H. Grose, 2 vols (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1874), I, 487.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, I, 404.

¹⁰⁴ Hume's *Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding, and Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1748, 1750), ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), pp. 43, 42.

¹⁰⁵ Hume, *Treatise*, I, 484, 485, 487.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 466.

dependence on each other'¹⁰⁷ so that the perceiving, reflecting mind slides between the 'confounded' or 'related objects'¹⁰⁸ without conscious volition.¹⁰⁹

Yeobright's constant and intimate interaction with the heath educates him into a sensible understanding of the world, and he reads the place as a whole, as something altogether worth knowing.¹¹⁰ It is those like Eustacia, who read it in pieces, who are doomed to incomprehension, and Hardy shows how knowledge comes from these visual structures. As an empiricist, he recognizes the primacy of the senses, particularly sight, in the formulation of knowledge, but sight does not automatically mean knowledge; seeing is only a way to knowing. As a poet, he insists that emotional, intellectual, imaginative, sensual and material co-operate, and it is the accumulation of personal 'impressions' of the moment on the pages of the memory which allows Clym to create and know reality. As he grows, he negotiates with that similarly evolving realm, his experiences contributing meaning to his perceptions.

The Return of the Native is Hardy's contribution to the nineteenth-century debate over learning and intellectualism, and although published in 1878, the action of the novel takes place during the 1840s-50s when the controversy was at its height.¹¹¹ On the one hand were those who envisaged education as a social control: Carlyle alleged that literacy would prevent anarchy,¹¹² and Mill maintained that 'convictions as to what is right and wrong [would be] deeply engraved on the feelings by early education'.¹¹³ Thus

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., I, 485.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., I, 492.

¹⁰⁹ In 1855, picking up on Humean philosophy, Bain argues that 'contiguity' not only joins things 'presented to the mind at the same time...but, in addition to this reproductive connexion,...will...recall another separated from it in time' (Introductory section to 'Agreement - Law of Similarity', in *The Senses and the Intellect*, pp. 486-91 (p. 486)). 'Objects become associated with their owners...[and] persons...frequenting their locality' ('Composition of Contiguities', in *The Senses and the Intellect*, pp. 578-85 (p. 580)).

¹¹⁰ It is also Clym's ingrained 'familiarity' which exorcises any sense of sublime terror in the heath, and though, as Wordsworth concludes, 'it is only very slowly that the mind is opened out to a perception of Beauty co-existing in the same object with those of sublimity' ('The Beautiful and the Sublime', II, 360), it is Clym's intellectual eye which permits him to really see and feel the significance behind its unorthodox Beauty.

¹¹¹ Such a social issue inevitably found its literary correlative. The Victorian novel is in part characterized by an obsession with book symbolism and educational concerns. Some of the most notable early examples are the attacks launched against regimental education by Charlotte Brontë in *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Dickens, especially in *Hard Times* (1854), and redundant (or non- "utilitarian") teaching methods in Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860). The polemic was still raging during the last decade of the century with *Jude the Obscure* (1895).

¹¹² Thomas Carlyle, 'Chartism' (1839) in *Thomas Carlyle: Selected Writings*, ed. Alan Shelston (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988), pp. 151-232 (esp. pp. 221-7).

¹¹³ J.S. Mill, *Autobiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1924), pp. 140-1. In a series of articles called 'The Spirit of the Age' that he wrote for the *Examiner* between 9 January and 29 May 1831, Mill attempted to apply the Comtean historical vision to current situation of England. Though he publicly declared that there must be a moral and social revolution, which shall, indeed, take away no man's lives or property, but which shall leave no man one fraction of unearned distinction or unearned importance' (*The Spirit of the Age*, ed. F.A. Hayek (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), p. 33), in private he confessed to the Saint-Simonian, d'Eichthal, 'that your social organization, under some modification or other...is likely to be the final and permanent condition of the human race' (*Earlier Letters of J.S. Mill*, ed. Francis E. Mineka (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), 30 Nov, 1831, p. 88).

Yeobright wants to use it as a form of government among the rustics. On the other were those who argued that learning was a revolutionary force, Captain Vye vehemently contesting that knowledge encourages subversion, especially in the young: "If they'd never been taught how to write they wouldn't have been able to scribble such villainy," he remarks over blasphemous graffiti. The country was apparently "all the better" (*RN*, 2.I) when illiterate.¹¹⁴

Hardy's figurative model juxtaposes primitive and modern, natural and social ways of learning in the context of the personified North/South dualism. Eustacia blames the imagined inimicality of the natural world for mankind's inherent evils; Clym despises the real, social circumstances which stimulate the worst rather than the best side of humanity: ignorance. It is a profound irony that his incisive eye is blinded by his intellectual pursuits, his plans speeding him toward the work from which he wishes to raise the heathlanders. Yet inconsistency abounds, for although Clym is socially degraded and intellectually stifled as a furze-cutter, the work, so intimately associated with the primitive mysteries of the earth, involves a 'primaeval' knowledge, 'a share in the mystery',¹¹⁵ and he finds in the 'ballast' of Egdon's predominant labour a soothing monotony for his mind 'harassed by the irrepressible New' (*RN*, 1.I).

Sumner maintains that 'Clym's modernity remains theoretical and abstract, on the periphery of the story', because his responses to emotional crises are not 'derived from a conflict between a traditional education and modern ideas'.¹¹⁶ While it is true that the texts over which he slaves are never cited (as they are with Sue and Jude), it is arguable that Clym's 'modernity' is central, not marginal, to the work's perceptual thesis. His 'modern perceptiveness' may be 'theoretical and abstract', abstruse and obscure in that it is never fully knowable, but it is the ineffability of these epistemological and ontological questions which the heath - unequivocally central - externalizes; it is the conflict between 'traditional education and moral ideas' which fuels the 'intellectual lens' polemic.

¹¹⁴ It is the rustics themselves who offer the most straightforward comment on Wildeve's conventional training: "His learning was no use to him at all" (*RN*, I.III). See William J. Hyde, 'Hardy's View of Realism: A Key to the Rustic Characters', *Victorian Studies*, 2 (Sept 1958), 451-9.

¹¹⁵ Lionel Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy* (1894; rpt. London: The Bodley Head, 1923), p. 129.

¹¹⁶ Rosemary Sumner, *Thomas Hardy: Psychological Novelist* (London: Macmillan, 1981), p. 108.

Clym's ambitions, given the reality of the circumstances in which they are expected to operate, are idealistic and impractical: 'We can hardly imagine bucolic placidity quickening to intellectual aims without imagining social aims as a transitional phase' (*RN*, 3.II), interposes the narrator, and, as Bury says, 'political, moral, and intellectual progress are inseparable from material progress'.¹¹⁷ A potential Carlylean hero who fails to see through the social sham to the reality of the human condition underneath,¹¹⁸ Yeobright 'is a victim of the fantasies of his idealism, and is thus blind to the basic human passions which govern the intended objects of this teaching'.¹¹⁹ Indeed, his wish to instil 'serene comprehensiveness' is defined in socio-intellectual terms, for although 'mentally...in a provincial future...abreast with the central town thinkers of his date...the rural world was not ripe for him',¹²⁰ his revolutionary placing of 'aesthetic effort'¹²¹ above 'social effort' presaging momentous social upheavals for it 'disturb[s] a sequence to which humanity had been long accustomed' (*RN*, 3.II). In the words of Johnson, Hardy exhibits 'how a little leaven of fresh learning may work havoc among the weighty mass of ancient, customary, thought'.¹²²

In 1885 Tennyson declared that 'these are the days of advance, the works of the men of mind',¹²³ and Hardy's attraction to the nineteenth-century's obsession with the unstoppable 'march of the mind'¹²⁴ charts the collapse of meritorious ideologies, particularly utilitarianism, in the face of 'The Inevitable Movement Onward' (*RN*, 6.I).¹²⁵

¹¹⁷ J.B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress* (1920; London: Macmillan, 1960), p. 293.

¹¹⁸ Robert C. Schweik, 'Theme, Character, and Perspective in Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native*', *Philological Quarterly*, XL1 (Oct 1962), 757-67 (p. 766).

¹¹⁹ Marlene Springer, *Hardy's Use of Allusion* (London: Macmillan, 1983), p. 117.

¹²⁰ Paris's 'popular ethical systems' during the 1840s consisted of the pre-Marxian doctrines of socialists such as Cabet, Saint-Simon and Fourier. Hardy does not refer to such positivist systems explicitly, but they are implied in Clym's altruistic desire 'to raise the class at the expense of the individuals, rather than the individuals at the expense of the class' (*RN*, 3.II).

¹²¹ Cp. Dorothea's desire to make 'beauty', especially beautiful art, accessible to all: 'I should like to make life beautiful - I mean everybody's life. And then all this immense expanse of art, that seems to somehow lie outside life and make it no better for the world, pains one. It spoils my enjoyment of anything when I am made to think that most people are shut out from it.' Ladislav's reply is to 'call that the fanaticism of sympathy...You might say the same of landscape, of poetry, of all refinement' (*Middlemarch* (1872), ed. W.J. Harvey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), Ch. 22). Clym's sympathetic fanaticism is similarly constructed in his wish to refine the rustics along intellectual lines and show them, through education, what he can see and appreciate. But the 'beauty' involved for Hardy and Eliot is not the same; Eliot's is more orthodox, Hardy's tends toward the sublime.

¹²² Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, p. 50.

¹²³ Tennyson, *Maud; A Monodrama* (1855), in *The Complete Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1898), I. I. vii.

¹²⁴ Ian Gregor, *The Great Web: The Form of Hardy's Major Fiction* (London: Faber & Faber, 1974), p. 101; Robert Southey, 'The Devil's Walk', *Stanza* 29, 151-3, 161-2. Fred Reid, 'Wayfarers and Seafarers: Ideas of History in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XIII:3 (Oct 1997), 47-57, notes that the phrase "march of mind"...occurred frequently in nineteenth century historical discourse and probably owed its currency mainly to the Marquis de Condorcet (1743-1794), who looked to an "analysis of the march of the human understanding" to show that nature had fixed no limits to human progress' (p. 47).

¹²⁵ Given the current intellectual climate, this is possibly akin to Eliot's reference to the onward tendency of human things' in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), ed. A.S. Byatt (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), IV, 1. Eliot was writing the novel as Darwin's *The Origin of Species* appeared in November 1859, and the idea of a developing, as opposed to a created, universe appealed equally to Eliot and Hardy. In December 1859, Eliot wrote of Darwin's treatise, 'it makes an epoch...to the Doctrine of Development...So the world gets on

Arnold's belief that 'thought and mind / Will hurry us with them on their homeless march'¹²⁶ is validated by Clym's experience of the evils of psychic evolution, and reconsidered in 1882: 'the march of the mind' issues from 'the thoughts that shake mankind' derived from 'science rather than art' (*La*, I.11). This temper was addressed by the Romantics who, conscious of the Burden of the Mystery which, in Keats's words, 'subdues the mightiest minds', acknowledge the potential disturbance promised by 'a grand march of intellect'.¹²⁷ Peacock's *Crotchet Castle* (1831) is a part of this intellectual upheaval, and in chapter ii, 'The March of Mind', Dr Folliott declares in no uncertain terms, "I am out of patience with this march of mind" which seeks to educate the populace. Moreover, though a significant majority of the guests at the dinner table are 'a representative cross-section of scientists in the age of the March of Mind', the fanciful impracticability of their schemes 'prevents the reader from linking them with those favourite subjects of the March of Mind - mechanics, chemistry and hydrostatics. They have nothing to do with the enlightenment of the masses'.¹²⁸ It is also significant that the real concerns interrogated by Peacock are presented as 'a debate between the "ancients" and the "moderns". And...the "ancient" party is allowed to prevail'¹²⁹ just as it is in Hardy at this time. And as Peacock ridicules those driven by intellectual passion, so Southey scoffs at the same idea in 'The Devil's Walk' (1799) thirty years earlier:

step by step towards brave clearness and honesty! And, in a qualifying comment which certainly foreshadows Hardy, adds, 'But to me the Development theory and all other explanations of processes by which things come to be, produce a feeble impression compared with the mystery that lies under the processes' (*The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954-78), III, 227). For G.H. Lewes also, 'the study of Development is quite a modern study...A change has come over the spirit of enquiry...In Geology, in Physiology, in History and in Art, we are all now bent on tracing the phases of development. To understand the grown wetry to follow the growth' (Lewes's emphasis; *The Life and Works of Goethe* (1855; London: Dent, 1908), Book V, Chapter IX). And for Eliot, as much as for Hardy, this development is intellectual in import. And just as Eliot seems to share Darwin's doubt regarding forward progression - Darwin said, 'I believe...in no law of necessary development' (*The Origin of Species*, ed. J.W. Burrow (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), Ch. XI, p. 348), and Eliot confessed, 'Natural selection is not always good and depends (see Darwin) on many caprices of very foolish animals' (*The George Eliot Letters*, IV, 377) - so her letter of 1857 to Sara Hennell prefigures Hardy's own sentiments on the (Spencerian) 'Unknowable' Mystery of things: 'I feel every day a greater disinclination for theories and arguments about the origins of things in the presence of all this mystery and beauty and pain and ugliness, that floods one with conflicting emotion' (*The George Eliot Letters*, II, 341).

¹²⁶ Arnold, 'Empedocles on Etna' (1852), Act II, lines 358-9. Empedocles bemoans the fact that

...each succeeding age in which we are born
Will have more peril for us than the last;
Will goad our senses with a sharper spur,
Will fret our minds to an intenser play...
And we shall struggle awhile, gasp and rebel -
And we shall fly for refuge to past times. (Act II, lines 377-83)

Arnold declared, 'My poems represent, on the whole, the main movement of mind of the last quarter of a century' (*Letters of Matthew Arnold*, 1848-1888, ed. G.W.E. Russell, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1895), II, 9).

¹²⁷ Keats's letter to Sir Joshua Reynolds, May 3, 1818; rpt. *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. Maurice Buxton Forman (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 4th edn., 1952), pp. 138-44 (p. 143).

¹²⁸ Marilyn Butler, *Peacock Displayed: A Satirist in his Context* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 186, 185. See the rest of the chapter, 'The March of Mind: *Crotchet Castle*', for a thorough discussion of this topic.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

Fine progress they make in our literal opinions,
 My Utilitarians,
 My all sorts of -inians...
 Wise and foolish, great and small,
 March-of-Intellect-Boys all.¹³⁰

For Peacock and Hardy, the polemic polarizes two sorts of cultural value which they treat with pronounced ambivalence. Peacock 'makes his cranks representative of the men who shape destiny, as cosy reactionaries nearly always do',¹³¹ and Hardy's intellectual heroes receive an ambiguous mixture of derision and praise.¹³² Misguided and shaken by the age's progressive thoughts, Yeobright continues under a personal delusion: he wants "'to teach people the higher secrets of happiness'" even while he is ignorant of "'how to keep out of the gross misery which the most untaught are wise enough to avoid'" (*RN*, 5.I). He tries to foist his sagacious comprehension of reality onto an outmoded vision while conscious that the modern view brings only misery; "'yet how people do strive after it and get it!'" (*RN*, 1.II). Ignorance seems to guarantee a modicum of happiness, if not actual bliss, 'The Dorsetshire Labourer' (1883) translating this theory into a definite social critique:

it is among such communities as these that happiness will find her last refuge on earth, since it is among them that a perfect insight into the conditions of existence will be longest postponed.¹³³

Only the unconventionally educated remain cheerful, are oblivious to the painful exigencies of life, and preserve the remnants of an ever-threatened 'Merry England' with its natural instincts and insatiable 'zest for existence which was so intense in early civilizations' (*RN*, 3.I). But in trying to appropriate and subvert this heritage, Clym is cast

¹³⁰ Robert Southey, 'The Devil's Walk', Stanza 29, 151-3, 161-2, in *Poems of Robert Southey*, ed. Maurice H. Fitzgerald (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1909). Coleridge had published the 'Devil's Thoughts' in the collection of his *Poetical Works* in 1828, and Southey's poem, notwithstanding the controversy over its authorship, was submitted to numerous revisions from its initial publication in *The Morning Post* (6 Sept, 1799) until its final publication in Southey's collected edition in 1837.

¹³¹ A.E. Dyson, 'Peacock: The Wand of Enchantment', in *The Crazy Fabric: Essays in Irony* (London: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 57-71 (p. 65).

¹³² This holds as much for Clym as for Somerset, St. Cleve, Fitzpiers, Clare and Jude, but the intellectualized heroines, Grace and Sue in particular, do not seem to attract Hardy's satire so much as his sympathy. Clym also anticipates these later intellectuals and is a forerunner of Jude in particular. See V.T. Hopkins, 'Clym the Obscure', *Thomas Hardy Society Review*, 1:9 (1983), 273-5.

¹³³ 'The Dorsetshire Labourer', *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, ed. Harold Orel (London: Macmillan, 1967; rpt. 1990), pp. 168-91 (p. 169).

in the light of antagonist, destroyer, he is the harbinger of disillusion not enlightenment. And it is written all over his face.

Displaying 'marks derived from a perception of his surroundings' (*RN*, 2.VI), Yeobright's visage is the human equivalent of Egdon's metaphorical text,¹³⁴ and an 'observer's eye' is 'arrested, not by his face as a picture, but by his face as a page; not by what it was, but by what it recorded' (*RN*, 3.I). In the self-reflexive episode, 'The Two Stand Face to Face' (*RN*, 2.VI), the narrator composes the reader's first glimpse of Clym as one character's sight (but not view - this is monopolized by the narrator) of him. Eustacia's voyeuristic, 'riveted...gaze' defines a framed 'spectacle' that facilitates a lesson in how to read his face - 'people who began by beholding him ended by perusing him' - yet the result is one of sheer bafflement.¹³⁵ The face may be 'overlaid with legible meanings' which Hardy interprets, a gesture which places the reader in a privileged position similar to that of the omniscient narrator, but a discrepancy remains: we are told about more than we are actually shown in action. Additionally, this exposition excludes Eustacia. Denied this inside information, the key to these cryptic symbols,¹³⁶ she is left 'troubled', and Clym remains as inscrutable and as enigmatic to his physical observer as Bathsheba did to hers.¹³⁷

The context of 'the spectacle constituted an area of two feet in Rembrandt's intensest manner' (*RN*, 2.VI), a functional allusion which offers a pertinent commentary on the intellectual eye, especially as during the 1870s Rembrandt's anti-aestheticism rivalled Hardy's own. More interested in portraying essential qualities than in producing beautiful artefacts (Hardy noted how he 'imperiously demanded absolute submission & fidelity to the inward vision' (*LN*, II, 2401)),¹³⁸ Rembrandt experimented with the 'hitherto unperceived beauty' (*EL*, p. 151), as Hardy would say, of his subject. And just

¹³⁴ Psychoanalytic readings emphasize the identification. See Mary Ellen Jordan, 'Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native*: Clym Yeobright and Melancholia', *American Imago*, 39:2 (1982), 101-18. For an interpretation of the correlation between Clym's 'thought-worn' face and 'haggard' Egdon's, and how it places the reader, see George Wotton, *Thomas Hardy: Towards a Materialist Criticism* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan; Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble, 1985), pp. 119-20.

¹³⁵ The moment reverses the masculine scrutiny of the feminine 'picture' in Ch. I of *FMC*; here the feminine tries to 'read' a masculine 'page'. Because both artefacts are alien to their perusers, nothing concrete is learned by either.

¹³⁶ Cp. George Eliot's pertinent comment in *The Mill on the Floss*: 'the lines and lights of the human countenance are like other symbols - not always easy to read without a key' (III. 7).

¹³⁷ There is an important difference between the novels as regards the reader. In *RN*, the reader is a mental observer of Clym; in *FMC* we are, along with Oak, physical observers and thus deprived of the narrator's 'insight'.

¹³⁸ 'The Growth of Rembrandt', *Times Literary Supplement* (Dec 7, 1911), p. 497. See Alastair Smart, 'Pictorial Imagery in the Novels of Thomas Hardy', *Review of English Studies*, n.s. 12 (1961), 262-80, which focuses on Hardy's knowledge of the visual arts, particularly Rembrandt and Turner.

as Rembrandt was 'never more himself than when chronicling the time-worn wrinkles in the face,'¹³⁹ so Hardy focuses on Clym's 'though-worn' visage to detect 'the typical countenance of the future' (*RN*, 3.I). In 1880 Hardy discussed 'the interesting subject of the art of the future' with the sculptor, Woolner, and, drawing attention to Clym's prescient 'countenance', sent the latter 'a copy of my *The Return of the Native* where, at p. 171, I have embodied my ideas on the matter (*CL*, I, 73). Inclining toward incompatibility, the overall idea counterposes the limitations of advanced culture and the remedial, expansive consciousness of the prelapsarian Greeks as a renaissance is anticipated: 'Should there be a classic period to art hereafter, its Pheidias may produce such faces' (*RN*, 3.I).¹⁴⁰

Just as the sublime power of Egdon's natural text chronicles the changing histories of its primitive writers, so the face of its modern 'product' is read as a humanized palimpsest, its 'outer symmetry' and 'beauty' being re-written as it is

ruthlessly overrun by its parasite, thought...The face was well shaped...But the mind within was beginning to use it as a mere waste tablet whereon to trace its idiosyncrasies as they developed themselves...He already showed that thought is a disease of the flesh, and indirectly bore evidence that ideal physical beauty is incompatible with emotional development and a full recognition of the coil of things. (*RN*, 2. VI)

This facial parchment records the definition of the 'modern spirit' as supplied by Pater and Arnold while they were most swayed by Hellenism. In addressing 'the infection of our mental strife' which regards thought as 'this strange disease of modern life',¹⁴¹ Arnold paves the way for Pater's 'Hellenic spirit' in 'Wincklemann' (1873):

The longer we contemplate that Hellenic ideal, in which man is at unity with himself, the more we may be inclined to regret that he should ever have passed beyond it, to contend for a perfection that...frets the flesh, and discredits the actual world around us.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Anon., *Saturday Review* (Jan 16, 1875), 83.

¹⁴⁰ It is a curious coincidence that Woolner's own sculptured bust was read 'as the epitome of a life; the poems of many years seem to write their lines across cheek and brow' (Anon., *Saturday Review*, 41 (June 1876), 747). The idea that the 'modern' face expressed the sum of its existence was not uncommon during the nineteenth century. F.G. Simcox, 'The Transformation of the British face', *Art Journal*, n.s. 13 (June 1874), said that 'every generation writes its own story' in the face, and that 'the history of a long past may be written underneath' (p. 21). It is also possible that he pre-empted Hardy's belief that the modern face reflected modern sensibilities. Simcox refers to the 'intellectual movement', the 'accumulation of positive knowledge', and claims that 'our life, which is reflected in our faces, has been gradually transformed by our growing knowledge' (ib.).

¹⁴¹ Arnold, 'The Scholar-Gipsy' (1853), line 203.

¹⁴² Pater, *The Renaissance*, p. 222.

Classical sculpture is applauded precisely because the thought it embodies

has not yet become too inward; the mind has not yet begin to boast of its independence of the flesh; the spirit has not yet absorbed everything with its emotions, nor reflected its own colour everywhere.¹⁴³

Hardy laments the loss of that 'Hellenic idea of life' and echoes Pater's final judgement: the range and diversity of 'Hellenic culture' is now impossible to realize given the modern mind's consciousness of 'the universality of [that] natural law' which abandons mankind amidst 'bewildering toils'.¹⁴⁴

Such 'mental luminousness' (*RN*, 2.VI) with its intellectual recasting of reality means that 'physically beautiful men - the glory of the race when it was young - are almost an anachronism now' (*RN*, 3.I). Hardy's underlining of the phrase 'the beautiful youth' (*LN*, I, 442)¹⁴⁵ at the time of writing *The Return of the Native* pinpoints the work's intellectual creed, for 'a man' who escapes from 'setting a mark of mental concern anywhere upon himself, is too far removed from modern perceptiveness to be a modern type' (*RN*, 3.I). Such types increase in number and decrease in age as the thesis develops, and just as Clym cannot be 'handsome' because of his 'habit of meditation', so Somerset could be 'broadly categorized as a young man' but for the 'contradictory testimonies' of his face 'owing to a too dominant speculative activity in him...Briefly, he had more of beauty - if beauty it ought to be called - of the future human type than of the past' (*La*, I.1).¹⁴⁶ Outlook becomes physical and defines the reality it confronts.

It is with such antithetical images in mind that we evaluate the disparity between the eyes of Clym and his observer. As a beautiful woman affiliated with Southern ways of thinking, behaving and looking, Eustacia is at complete variance with the sublime ugliness of her milieu, but as an artistic creation she is inextricably a part of it; her relationship with the swarthy expanse is one of consistent inconsistency. She internalizes

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 206.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 231.

¹⁴⁵ B. Jowett, introduction to his translation of *The Dialogues of Plato*, 4 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1871), I, 3.

¹⁴⁶ In *Two on a Tower* (1881), Hardy embodied a totally incongruous perspective in the siderealist, Swithen St. Cleeve: 'Whether because no deep felicity is likely to arise from the condition...to say in these days that a youth is beautiful is not to award him that amount of credit which the expression would have carried with it if he had lived in the time of the Classical Dictionary' (*TT*, Ch.1). Cp. Winklemann's discovery of a Greek youth: 'I found in a beautiful body a soul created for nobleness, gifted with the sense of beauty' (*Pater, The Renaissance*, p. 192).

and projects the heath's *alter ego*, its classical darkness, and brooding 'Tartarean' isolation as surely as Clym incarnates its modern tenor, and yet she is simultaneously a typical product of the modern world. Two years after the novel's publication, Hardy declared that the whole 'point' of imaginative literature was 'to adopt that form of romanticism which is the mood of the age' (*EL*, p. 189; Nov 1880), and in this context Eustacia is conceived in 'a mood' of Romantic revolt, not of Romantic sentimentality.¹⁴⁷ Though sufficiently perceptive to acknowledge 'the mendacity of the imagination' (*RN*, 2.III), she consciously abandons herself to its deception and has no tolerance of external facts and realities which threaten to antagonize her inner desires, an attitude which 'lowered her as an intellect, [but] raised her as a soul' (*RN*, 2.III). Though she grudgingly concedes to "'a sort of beauty in the scenery'" (*RN*, 1.X) when in its purple season, ironic given the modern significance of this colour, the 'subtle beauties of the heath' (*RN*, 1.VII) are lost to her because, from a Wordsworthian perspective, 'innumerable are the impressions which may exclude [the observer] from a communication with the sublime in the midst of objects eminently capable of exciting that feeling'.¹⁴⁸ Chief among these is that the observer 'may be depressed by the image of barrenness' and 'everywhere might be haunted or disturbed by a sense of incongruity, ...that intermixture of the terrible & the ludicrous'.¹⁴⁹ It is an almost anticipatory diagnosis of Eustacia's condition. Capable of responding only to 'the sort of beauty called charming and fair', she remains impervious and blind to what that 'subtler and scarcer instinct' reveals. As Wordsworth explains,

the capability of perceiving [the sublime and the beautiful], & the degree in which they are perceived, will of course depend upon the state or condition of the mind, with respect to habits, knowledge, & powers, which is brought within the reach of their influence.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Eustacia herself is definitely a semi-Rossettian creation, and the picture painted of her in I. VII is akin to an 'Astarte Syriaca' (1877) or 'Proserpine' (1874). See J.B. Bullen, *The Expressive Eye: Fiction and Perception in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 103-5, who traces the implications of the Rossetti associations. It is also possible that Hardy's reference to Eustacia's profile bearing the likeness of 'Sappho and Mrs Siddons' (*RN*, 1. VI) may refer as much to the former's legendary watery death by suicide over unrequited love, as to Charles-August Mengin's Pre-Raphaelite 'Sappho' (1877) which Hardy may have seen while writing the novel. She is exceptionally dark, full and brooding and stands with a similarly dark and intense landscape. If Hardy was familiar with the painting, it may partly explain subsequent alterations: in the MS and serial version in the *Belgravia*, XXXIV (Feb 1878), 493, the likeness is to 'Marie Antionette and Lord Byron'; the first edition of 1878 reads 'Marie Antionette and Mrs Siddons', and only in the Osgood McIlvaine edition of 1895 did the former become 'Sappho'. The changes ensure that all traces of Romanticism, even revolutionary romanticism, are removed, and the classical and tragic partnership intensified.

¹⁴⁸ Wordsworth, 'The Sublime and the Beautiful', II, 359.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, II, 353.

Eustacia's egocentricity negates Clym's selfless altruism and defaces Egdon's social text by superimposing her personal history. But just as Clym's mind is not 'well-proportioned' (*RN*, 3.I), so Eustacia's potential 'mental clearness' (*RN*, 1.X) is sabotaged by her singular brand of visual extremism in a passage which has important critical and visual implications. Hardy has taken considerable pains to create a three-dimensional environment, and now he pushes the examination further by exploring Eustacia's mind in three-dimensional terminology:

There was no middle distance in her perspective: romantic recollections of sunny afternoons on an esplanade, with military bands, officers, and gallants around, stood like gilded letters upon the dark tablet of surrounding Egdon. (*RN*, 1.VII)¹⁵¹

There is a lot at work here. Eustacia's limited view of things as fore/background is read in visual terms, and the three-dimensional panorama which fixes this image becomes symbolic of her inner eye.¹⁵² Hardy not only drew on contemporary stereographic techniques to create this vision; his epistemology here also seems indebted to Carlyle's presentation of the seasons as 'the Alphabet' which teaches the learner 'to syllable and partly read the grand Volume of the World: what matters it whether such Alphabet be in large gilt letters or in small ungilt ones, so you have an eye to read it?'¹⁵³ But Eustacia lacks Teufelsdröckh's eye; for him, 'eager to learn, the very act of looking thereon was a blessedness that gilded all...[W]onder after wonder bodied itself forth'.¹⁵⁴ Eustacia does not read/learn from the Volume but presumes to re-write/gild it by bodying forth her subjective impressions.

During the late 1880s, Hardy came across Maudsley's *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings* (1886), and what he found there must have confirmed this projectionist idea:

Mental representation so intense as to become mental presentation is a faculty of mind...met with among certain artists...'You only have to work

¹⁵¹ Cp. Alexander Bain: 'Written language appeals to the eye, and is rendered mentally coherent in the shape of impressions of sight' ('Similarity in Diversity - Sensations', in *The Senses and the Intellect* (1855; London: Longmans, Green & Co., 4th edn., 1894), pp. 497-517 (p. 511)).

¹⁵² The observation that 'she was a girl of some forwardness of mind' (*RN*, 1. VII) thus takes on numerous meanings.

¹⁵³ Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus: The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh* (1832; London: Chapman & Hall, 1870), Bk. II, Ch. II.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

up imagination to the state of vision & the thing is done' (Blake).
(*LN*, I, 1511)¹⁵⁵

According to his first biographer, Tatham, Blake

always asserted that he had the power of bringing his imagination before his mind's eye, so completely organized and so perfectly formed...that while he copied the vision (as he called it) upon his plate or canvas, he could not err.¹⁵⁶

So Eustacia 'imagined all the more of what she had seen', generates eidetic images and exposes them to the sensitive 'plate' of Egdon, or projects them on to the world-screen like a lantern slide. Newman, though recognizing the potency of this visioning, refuses to admit objective realization of the mind-image:

An image, with the characteristics of perfect veracity and faithfulness, may be ever so distinct and eloquent an object presented before the mind (or...an "objectum internum," or a "subject-object"); but, nevertheless, there may be no external reality in the case, corresponding to it, in spite of its impressiveness.¹⁵⁷

Though the 'external reality' of these impressions is long gone, Eustacia translates them in the biblical sense to rescue them from extinction, and they become more vividly visible from being distilled in the alembic of the imagination than they ever actually were. Ignoring Newman's reservations, these 'gilded letters' are hypostasized as physical phenomena 'upon the dark tablet' and assume an autonomous existence anterior to and independent of the perceiver. Quasi-visionary, they are substantive objects whose quality resides in their capacity for being looked at or read. In *The Hand of Ethelberta*, such eidetic objectifications are regarded as disruptive, as a perversion, after Eliot, of the real facts:

Looking at the scene as it were before his eyes, [Julian] discerned...episodes of childhood...[T]he landscape suffering greatly by these visions, until it became no more than the patterned wall-tints about the paintings in a gallery; something necessary to the tone, yet not regarded. (*HE*, Ch. 2)

¹⁵⁵ Henry Maudsley, *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings* (London, 1886), pp. 193-4.

¹⁵⁶ Frederick Tatham, 'The Life of William Blake', in *The Letters of W. Blake*, ed. A.G.B. Russell (London: Methuen, 1906), p. 18. Morton D. Paley, *Energy and Imagination* (Oxford: Clarendon: 1970), claims that Blake possessed 'a highly developed capacity for what is now called eidetic imagery' (p. 202).

¹⁵⁷ John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (1870; London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1909), p. 81.

The analogy between 'landscape' and 'wall-tints...in a gallery' is repeated in the reductive image of Egdon as a 'dark tablet', an unnoticed backdrop for the letters of the subjectively-imposed, literary art-form.¹⁵⁸ And the fact that the process is perceived as inherently disruptive is critical. Simons's exploration of Hardy's stereographic technique emphasizes the necessary distortions that take place in all attempts to reproduce what is "real" through art:

The repose of stereo photographs makes them not a clearer replication of the physical world, but makes it *un-real*...Like fiction, stereography gives only an appearance of reality, the illusion of depth, a distortion more than a reproduction. In this light it seems Hardy's fictional depiction of 'the real' is like that of the stereograph; he created a space at once still and moving, exaggerated and minutely detailed, literal and symbolic.¹⁵⁹

Eustacia's imaginative-stereographic transfiguration of external realities leaves her alienated from her environment by a gulf of incomprehension, for 'to dwell on a heath without studying its meaning was like wedding a foreigner without learning his tongue' (*RN*, 1.VII). To Eustacia, the usefulness of textual language and study as tools for acquiring knowledge are inconsequential; she reads Egdon exclusively in the light of her own wants and preconceptions. In addition, she is too beautiful to be intelligent, and so not yet, but perhaps 'at some time or other, physically beautiful women will be an anachronism' (*RN*, 2.VI) like their masculine counterparts. Neither 'thought-worn' nor susceptible to 'modern perceptiveness', Eustacia's classical, physical attractiveness resists and remains unravaged by the marks of 'the irrepressible New'.

Hardy's alternation of the North/South, Modern/Pagan polarities illustrates the plurality of intellectually-charged perspectives on life that are possible. Though all are true in themselves, none is credited as absolute (though it is clear where Hardy's

¹⁵⁸ In a passage appearing in the serial version but excised from chapter II of the first edition of *The Trumpet Major*, the narrator describes how the 'romantic' inclinations of Anne Garland, 'an imaginative girl', encourage her to bend 'her eyes on [the] microscopic spectacle' of visiting dignitaries, allowing 'her fancy to paint the portraits and histories of those who moved therein...That, as a matter of fact, the several coaches contained...numbers of commonplace attendants...made no difference whatever to the transcendence of her mental impressions'.

¹⁵⁹ Mark Simons, 'Hardy's Stereographic Technique', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XIII: 3 (Oct 1997), 86-93 (pp. 86, 92-3). Simons offers that 'the Victorian art of stereography, neglected thus far in Hardy studies, has much to offer in the consideration of Hardy's writing: it is a popular art which works synergistically to bridge the historical gap between photography and cinematography' (p. 86). See John Jones, *Wonders of the Stereoscope* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), for the historical and technical detail surrounding this art; David Lodge, 'Thomas Hardy as a Cinematic Novelist', in *Thomas Hardy After Fifty Years*, ed. Lance St John Butler (London: Macmillan, 1977), pp. 78-89; rpt. *Working with Structuralism: Essays and Reviews on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Literature*, ed. David Lodge (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 95-105. Eustacia herself attempts to transcend both time and space, a trait symbolized by the hour-glass and telescope which frequently occupy her hands. Arlene M. Jackson, 'Photography as Style and Metaphor in the Art of Thomas Hardy', *Thomas Hardy Annual: No. 2*, ed. Norman Page (London: Macmillan, 1984), 91-109, notes that Hardy 'never owned a camera, and no record exists of his feeling any compulsion to make a photograph with anyone else's equipment' (p. 91). For Hardy's suspicion of this art, see n. 192 of the Appendix.

preference lies), and each dualism exists in a state of ironic tension whereby both visions embrace all of the phases of seeing, knowing and creating reality. Near the beginning of the novel, Hardy's kaleidoscopic shifts between each view are so rapid that they merge, the synthesis sublimating a grotesque mutation: the firelight delineation of the rustics' physiognomies. Hardy's endeavour to capture 'the permanent moral expression' from the amorphous mass of fleeting impressions requires an imaginative disproportioning of facts which translates the commonplace into something horrifying yet marvellous:

Shadowy eye-sockets, deep as those of a death's head, suddenly turned into pits of lustre: a lantern-jaw cavernous, then it was shining; wrinkles were emphasized to ravines, or obliterated entirely by a changed ray... Those whom Nature had depicted as merely quaint became grotesque, the grotesque became preternatural; for all was in extremity. (RN, 1.III)¹⁶⁰

These faces speak of Hellenic mythology, Teutonic ritual and northern divinities, and it seems that a defiant literary fusion of Rossetti's and Rembrandt's canvases creates 'the brilliant lights and sooty shades' reminiscent of 'Dureresque vigour and dash' (RN, 1.III).¹⁶¹

Durer was censured for not 'feeling for beauty' and for subscribing to a style antagonistic to 'the normal type of ideal beauty' where 'countenance' was the issue.¹⁶² Critics admitted severe reservations about his 'strange tendency to the fantastic' and deprecated his 'wild Teutonic imagination'¹⁶³ as an uncouth indulgence. It was no doubt this recalcitrant streak which so appealed to Hardy and occasioned him to revere Durer

¹⁶⁰ Cp. 'the light of the flaming beacon, under which the purple rotundities of the heath show like bronze, and the pits like the eye-sockets of a skull' (D, 1.II.v). Hardy was particularly gifted with an eye for the bizarre effects of light on faces; it is possible that he may have been developing a moment encountered in Dickens where Monks and the Bumbles are hunched around a lamp: 'The faces of the three nearly touched... The sickly rays of the suspended lantern, falling directly upon them, aggravated the paleness and anxiety of their countenances, which, encircled by the deepest gloom and darkness, looked ghastly in the extreme' (*Oliver Twist* (1838), Ch. 38).

¹⁶¹ It is possible that Hardy formed his Hellenic conception from the 'aesthetic paganism' of Germany; he read Goethe and Winckelmann in G.H. Lewes's *Life of Goethe* in 1875. For a discussion of 'Paganism' in literature, see Henry Hatfield, *Aesthetic Paganism in German Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. vi-ix. Hatfield's definition of German literary paganism is applicable to the concept of Hellenism in Hardy, especially regarding Eustacia and the rustics: 'The typical modern pagan - of course he is an abstraction - tends to a belief in enjoyment rather than asceticism, and vindicates the physical side of life, often with a special stress on the sexual element. He is likely to insist upon man's just pride in himself, not humility' (p. vii). Cp. 'For the time paganism was revived in their hearts. The pride of life was all in all, and they adored none other than themselves' (RN, 4.III).

¹⁶² J.A. Crowe, ed. [Kugler's] *Handbook of Painting: The German, Flemish and Dutch Schools*, 2 vols (1874), p. 153; cited in Bullen, *The Expressive Eye*, p. 100. While visiting Naumann's studio with Ladislav and Casaubon, Will says that he expected Dorothea 'to be very sensitive to the beautiful everywhere'. In her response, Dorothea seems to offer a generalized comment on the want of beauty in contemporary art: 'I should like to make life beautiful - I mean everybody's life... I cannot help believing in glorious things in a blind sort of way. I should be quite willing to enjoy the art here, but there is so much that I don't know the reason of - so much that seems to me a consecration of ugliness rather than beauty. The painting and sculpture may be wonderful, but the feeling is often low and brutal, and sometimes even ridiculous' (*Middlemarch* (1872), Ch. 22).

¹⁶³ Mary Margaret Heaton, *The History of the Life of Albrecht Durer of Nuremberg* (1870), pp. 194, 166; cited in Bullen, *The Expressive Eye*, pp. 99, 100.

as a quintessentially northern artist, his 'strange love for the weird and grotesque'¹⁶⁴ standing out with prominent clarity. An unimpressed Pater believed that 'this preoccupation with serious thoughts and sad images...resulted...in something merely morbid or grotesque, in the *Danse Macabre* of...the grim inventions of Durer,'¹⁶⁵ and delivered his reference to the Northerner's 'grotesque' nature as the negative to the positive Southerner, Michelangelo, the true master of sublimity.

Though elements of Durer's grotesque are manifest in Hardy's work, Ruskin's critique of this technique provides by far the best commentary for an understanding of Hardy's fantastic treatment of his subject matter:

The mind, under certain phases of excitement, *plays with terror*, and summons images which, if it were another temper, would be awful, but ...it refrains for the time to acknowledge the true terribleness.¹⁶⁶

Modern Painters,¹⁶⁷ validating access to the truth through the strange, provided the raw material for Hardy's creative whimsicality:

The imagination is *always* right...It...*cannot* err...It knows simply what is there, and brings out the positive, errorless, unquestionable. So it is throughout art, and in all that the imagination does.¹⁶⁸

Like De Quincey, Ruskin forges an analogy between childish imagination and the mocking grotesque; like Browning, he sees beauty as the focus of the seriously-tempered mind: 'The imagination, when at play, is curiously like bad children, and likes to play with fire: in its entirely serious moods it dwells by preference on beautiful...

¹⁶⁴ Heaton, p. 165; Bullen, p. 100.

¹⁶⁵ Pater, *The Renaissance*, p. 93.

¹⁶⁶ Ruskin, *Works*, XI, 166. Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) contains interesting sections on pleasure gained from distress (as in tragedy, or in the sight of a conflagration - see Browning's 'The Heretic's Tragedy' (1855), in *The Poetical Works of Robert Browning* (London: Oxford University Press, 1905; rpt.1962), and his descriptions of 'a sort of delightful horror, a sort of tranquillity tinged with terror', influenced the aesthetic theory of the later eighteenth century. These varied ideas were brought together and interrogated with greater philosophical energy by Kant in the *Critique of Judgement* (1790).

¹⁶⁷ Hardy was familiar with *Modern Painters* as early as 1862 (see *EL*, p. 50; Aug 1862).

¹⁶⁸ Ruskin, *Works*, V, 145. Cp. Wordsworth's 'principal object' in his poems, as stated in the 'Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*' (1805), in *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. Michael Mason (London and New York: Longman, 1992), pp. 55-87; Appendix, pp. 87-93, which is 'to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect; and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature' (p. 59; emphasis added). On the other hand, Burke holds that 'the imagination is incapable of producing anything absolutely new' (*A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, I, 58).

images.¹⁶⁹ The rustic sketch describes an uneasy amalgamation of the 'serious' (which perceives the beautiful) and the 'playful' (which notices the terrible) as it tips toward jest 'with an undercurrent of sternest pathos'¹⁷⁰ in the proximity of the elderly to death. It is certainly 'a *Danse Macabre*',¹⁷¹ and at this juncture Ruskin actually cites Durer's 'Knight and Death' to illustrate his point.

Hardy is 'keenly alive to the humorous incongruities of life, but capable also of disentangling the heroic from the commonplace'; he can 'create the beautiful as well as philosophize upon the strange',¹⁷² and Ruskin's 'noble grotesque' which '*involves the true appreciation of beauty*' while disengaging the prosaic from the everyday, offers another valuable avenue into Hardy's method:

The master of the noble grotesque knows the depth of all at which he seems to mock, and would feel it another time, or feels it in a certain undercurrent of thought even while he jests with it.¹⁷³

Hardy's application of the serious and suggestive potential of bringing together, in an apparently random and arbitrary manner, disparate objects in bizarre contradictions is undertaken with a 'bold and fearless' incautiousness. Expanding his argument, Ruskin ideologically and linguistically anticipates Woolf's description of the 'margin of the unexpressed'¹⁷⁴ in Hardy's work:

A fine grotesque is the expression, in a moment, by a series of symbols thrown together in bold and fearless connections, of truths which it would have taken a long time to express in any verbal way and of which the connection is left for the beholder to work out for himself; the gaps, left or overleaped by the masters of the imagination, forming the grotesque character.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁹ Ruskin, *Works*, V, 131. This entire debate over imaginative beauty can be considered in the context of Keats's rapturous effusions over the 'Wings of Imagination' (Nov 22, 1817; *The Letters of John Keats*, pp. 66-9 (p. 68)). 'My Imagination is a Monastery,' he claimed (Aug 1820, pp. 507-8 (p. 508)), and declared 'I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart's affections, and the truth of Imagination. What the Imagination seizes as Beauty must be Truth - whether it existed before or not' (Nov 22, 1817, p. 67).

¹⁷⁰ Ruskin, *Works*, V, 131.

¹⁷¹ See my "'The Danse Macabre': Hardy, Browning, Ruskin and the Grotesque", *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 26 (Dec 1997), 22-8, which explores Hardy's use of this literary technique. See also pp. 344-348 of the Appendix.

¹⁷² William Minto, 'The Works of Thomas Hardy', *Bookman*, 1 (Dec 1891), 99; rpt. *TH:CA*, III, 66-70 (III, 69).

¹⁷³ Ruskin, *Works*, XI, 166-7.

¹⁷⁴ Virginia Woolf, 'The Novels of Thomas Hardy', in *The Common Reader: Second Series* (London: Hogarth Press, 1932), pp.

245-257 (p. 248); rpt. *Collected Essays*, ed. Leonard Woolf, 2 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1966), I, 256-66 (I, 258).

¹⁷⁵ Ruskin, *Works*, V, 132.

This symbolic associationism introduces a uniform consensus in the interpretation of phenomena as their figurative significance fluctuates with the rays and changing faces, with the perceiving mind, with the jesting or serious temperament colouring the observing eye. At this time, recourse to heavy-handed personification and symbolism was generally felt to be detrimental to pictorial representations, and mixing light and shade, and colour was proscribed to all except the greatest masters. Encountering such prohibitions, one of Hardy's nature could not resist indulgence.

Such incongruous visual combinations condense Hardy's response to numerous perceptual, epistemological and ontological doctrines, and propose an innovative revision of Hume's belief in the 'continu'd existence'¹⁷⁶ of things. Meaning is brought to hitherto unrelated items by seeing them in 'constant conjunction',¹⁷⁷ but the disturbing element, despite the individual familiarity of the objects, is their weird correlations.¹⁷⁸ The method acknowledges Lewes's theory on 'The Principle of Vision in Art' (1865):

A common incident, a simple phenomenon, which has been part of [the writer's] experience, often undergoes what may be called a 'transfiguration' in their souls...Philosophy and Art both render the invisible object by imagination. Where Sense observes two isolated objects, Imagination discloses two related objects. This relation is the nexus visible.¹⁷⁹

Though the objects are different, the eye discerns an essential truth in their similarity. The grotesque arises from 'the confusion of the imagination by the presence of truths which it cannot wholly grasp',¹⁸⁰ and Hardy 'has the gift of vision, to penetrate beneath the familiar surface, and to surprise us with ever fresh manifestations of the riches there'.¹⁸¹ Prosaic yet incompatible artefacts are looked at in an original manner, reconfigure our experience and knowledge of reality, and invest the composite elements with an iconic significance, for 'it is characteristic of these [fantastic] occurrences to seem unreal, and yet...they seem to reveal a deeper reality'.¹⁸² Hardy's grotesque is a

¹⁷⁶ Hume, *Treatise*, I, 484, 485, 487.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 466.

¹⁷⁸ Cp. 'The poet does not perceive things; the poet perceives the hitherto unperceived relations of things' (*LN*, II, 2412; Maurice Browne, 'The Poetry of W.W. Gibson', *Poetry Review*, I (Jan 1912), 18).

¹⁷⁹ G.H. Lewes, 'The Principles of Success in Literature', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 (1865), 85-95, 'The Principle of Vision': 185-96, 'Of Vision in Art': 572-89, 697-709; the treatise continues in *Fortnightly Review*, 2 (1865), 257-68, 689-710 (1, pp. 186, 576).

¹⁸⁰ Ruskin, *Works*, V, 130.

¹⁸¹ Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, p. 86.

¹⁸² Arthur McDowall, 'Conclusions and Applications', *Documents of Modern Literary Realism*, ed. George Becker (New Jersey,

form of 'high art' which 'increases the sense of vraisemblance' (*EL*, p. 299; Aug 1890), however discomforting, between inconsistencies, and relies for its overall effect on placing before us an image that is midway between actuality and fantasy: we may be shown one thing, but we see something else in these 'nightmare conjunctions'.¹⁸³ Such passages dramatize with graphic intensity the most abstract concepts while delighting in their intellectual and significant ambivalence.

Hardy's grotesqueries anticipate the disjunction and disorientation of the modern dilemma, the absurd, and Brookes finds that 'Hardy's multiple vision of the experience brings him close to the modern Absurd form of tragi-comedy or comi-tragedy'.¹⁸⁴ We yearn to discover meaning and order in the chaos perpetrated by this optical plurality, but the 'cause of shaking dread' (*RN*, 1.I) incited by such momentous revelations is too painful to articulate; it is that truth confronting an imagination wholly incapable of mastering it: 'The dread is what we do not and cannot know, the forces of the emptiness behind the actual'.¹⁸⁵ Even while 'the "simply natural" is interesting no longer' (*EL*, p. 242; Jan 1887), we fear a universe exclusively governed by and knowable through the too-interesting, the grotesque, and yet 'wrenching and twisting the frame of the real to provide a more penetrating vision, a more significant aesthetic experience',¹⁸⁶ produces a beauty of unprecedented hideousness. It is this fundamental alteration of material facts, this revelation of the mysterious and rare within the prosaic, which signals the move toward modernist prose fiction and a new way of interacting with reality.¹⁸⁷

Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 565-578 (p. 573).

¹⁸³ Albert J. Guerard, *Thomas Hardy: The Novels and Stories* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1949), p. 86.

¹⁸⁴ Jean Brooks, *Thomas Hardy: The Poetic Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press; London: Elek, 1971), p. 113. Hardy himself wrote that 'if you look beneath the surface of any farce you see a tragedy; and, on the contrary, if you blind yourself to the deeper issues of a tragedy you see a farce' (*EL*, p. 282; Oct 1888).

¹⁸⁵ Samuel Hynes, *The Pattern of Hardy's Poetry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), p. 62.

¹⁸⁶ Richard Carpenter, 'Hardy's "Gurgoyles"', *Modern Fiction Studies*, VI (Autumn 1960), 223-32 (p. 231). Browning, like Hardy, works on a principle of contrast. In 'The Heretic's Tragedy' (1855), the grotesque is, in part, contributed by the speaker's rejoicing over the horror of the spectacle. But the burning figure becomes a strangely beautiful thing, an appalling beauty, in the form of a flaming rose. 'A Grammarian's Funeral', written 'Shortly after the Revival of Learning in Europe' (1855), gives a grotesque and ironic account of modern learning and knowledge. The primitive inhabitants (Hardy's 'rearward of thinkers' (*RN*, 1.VI)) are those of 'the unlettered plain'; the dead Grammarian is taken to the 'appropriate' prospect encircled by 'the rock-row':

That's the appropriate country; there, man's thought,

Rarer, intenser,

Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it ought,

Chafes in the censor. (lines 8-13)

The echo of the thinker's words, 'Let me know all!' (line 62), rings throughout *RN*.

¹⁸⁷ Hardy's novel begins the realization of the Gothic heritage, bequeathed by the Romantic tradition, which was to be completed by the Modernists. Woolf, writing on Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), discovers the force which the romantic acquires by obliterating facts: 'With the sinking of the lights, the solidity of the foreground disappears, other shapes become apparent and other senses are roused. We become aware of the danger and darkness of our existence; comfortable reality has proved itself a phantom too. Outside our little shelter we hear the wind raging and the waves breaking' (Virginia Woolf, *Collected Essays*, 4 vols, ed. Leonard Woolf (London: Hogarth Press, 1966-7), II, 69-70). This could stand as a commentary on Hardy's novel.

Only a few months after the novel was published, Hardy recorded that 'a perception of the FAILURE of THINGS to be what they are meant to be, lends them, in place of the intended interest, a new and greater interest of an unintended kind' (*EL*, p. 163; Jan 1879). The 'unintended' interest occasioned by the 'fine grotesque' in Eustacia's final journey explodes the dialectical forces raging between modern learning (the letter) and ancient wisdom (the fire). Whereas the opening imagines a modern landscape of masculine intellectualism, this chapter presents, through an environment terrifying in its barbaric Gothicism,¹⁸⁸ the regressive, superstitious teachings bequeathed by a feminine culture. Susan's inherited insight, unlike Clym's acquired knowledge, is 'well known on Egdon at that date' (*RN*, 5.VII) and ultimately proves more potent and resilient. Though two "texts" are written at this point, only one remains.¹⁸⁹

Yet learning is only part of the process of understanding what to write; and why. The greater question is whether those who desire knowledge invite danger by their reckless pursuit, or whether it positively empowers members of society to control their lives. Susan possesses all the learning she deems necessary, and her use of pen and ink to reify the 'ghastly' effigy is a travesty of the advanced thinking for which the written text stands.¹⁹⁰ Moreover, her archaic language proves more influential than Clym's alternative: Eustacia ignores his civilized words, his letter stays unread, and she communicates with Wildeve now, as on other occasions, not by writing or speaking, but by lighting a fire. Flames are symbolic signs for these unconventional women, and as the effigy melts to nothing, Susan compounds the subversion and perversion of writing and speech by repeating the Lord's prayer backwards, hoping to coerce into confluence with her barbaric desires a more Pagan power. And the heath responds.

As Eustacia is consumed by earth, air, fire and water,¹⁹¹ the speculative intellectualism of the opening is undercut by the substantial reality of an antithetical

¹⁸⁸ See James Scott, 'Thomas Hardy's Use of Gothic', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 17 (1963), 363-80.

¹⁸⁹ There is the suggestion of a palimpsest at this point: Clym's 'writing' is erased to make room for Susan's equivalent but remains faintly visible. See the chapters on *PBE* p. 34, *MC* n. 129, and *TD* n. 223 for Hardy's use of, and reactions to, this notion.

¹⁹⁰ Jennifer Gribble, 'The Quiet Women of Egdon Heath', *Essays in Criticism*, 46:3 (1996), 234-57, examines how the effigy, itself a 'quiet woman', is used by Susan to 'silence' Eustacia. For silence and language as it effects Tess, see n. 201 in the chapter on *TD*.

¹⁹¹ For more recent contributions on the suicide/accident polemic, see Giles Mitchell, 'Narcissism and Death Wish in *The Return of the Native*: An Analysis of Eustacia Vye's Suicide', *Punjab University Research Bulletin*, 21:1 (April 1990), 3-16; Dixie Lee Larson, 'Eustacia Vye's Drowning: Defiance versus Convention', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, IX:3 (Oct 1993), 55-63. Richard Chisholm, 'The Attempted Resuscitation of Eustacia Vye', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XIII: 3 (Oct 1997), 83-5, explores the extent to which the other characters actually attempt to revive the water-logged victims.

epistemology. The real mystery for Hardy is the objective world as a thing in its own right despite its many and various appearances; Egdon's ultimate reality transcends the specifics of any single piece. It simply is. No longer an attentive consciousness, a mind appearing slowly 'to awake and listen' (*RN*, 1.I), but a passive body, a disembowelled creature 'oozing lumps of fleshy fungi which at this season of the year lay scattered over the heath like the rotting liver and lungs of some colossal animal' (*RN*, 5.VII), its objectivity is foregrounded. Even its soul is as 'strong and crude and organic as the body of a beast',¹⁹² and while it reclaims Eustacia, the heath turns on and crushes Clym. It is a triumph of intrinsic instinct over extrinsic learning; modern man is left broken by unfathomable powers, and here the novel originally ended.

But 'Aftercourses' prolongs the agony. Hurling into the pathetic, Clym's high ambitions are mocked as he is consigned to mediocrity. His misguided though altruistic intelligence undergoes an ironic reversal as, casting off his Parisian 'creeds and systems of philosophy', the native returns to complete his education.¹⁹³ His interaction with Eustacia and the rustics has refocused, but not necessarily corrected, his perspective, diluted his intellectual complacency, and encouraged him find 'enough to occupy his tongue in the opinions and actions common to all good men' (*RN*, 6.IV). By this point, Hardy's epistemological parameters are restricted to the experiences and words of everyday, for true knowing, true reality, is empirical; it has to be lived, not learned.¹⁹⁴ Thus, Clym's final appearance as Northern exemplar modified by Southern influence charts a return to the oldest educational tradition, the oral dissemination of knowledge.

From his position atop Rainbarrow¹⁹⁵ (in a parody of Eustacia), Clym can 'be seen from all adjacent points...the view of him being a...signal' to his hearers. The

¹⁹² D.H. Lawrence, 'Study of Thomas Hardy', in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers*, I, 398-516 (p. 415). See also A. Fleishman, 'The Buried Giant of Egdon Heath', in *Thomas Hardy's 'The Return of the Native'*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1987), pp. 95-109.

¹⁹³ Paris, though a real place, is only ever conjured through memory. See my *The Return of the Native and the Judgement of Paris: Power, Beauty or Knowledge*, *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 26 (Dec 1997), 20-1, which explores the antagonistic battle which Clym wages between different potentialities: Power (Hera / Mrs Yeobright), Beauty (Aphrodite / Eustacia) and Knowledge (Athena / Paris). The latter finally prevails once the other two have been destroyed.

¹⁹⁴ Clym's entire tragedy seems predicated upon Browning's 'A Grammarian's Funeral' (1855):

Oh, such a life as he resolved to live,
When he had learned it,
When he had gathered all books had to give!...
That before living he'd learn how to live -
No end to learning...
This man decided not to Live but Know. (lines 66-8, 76-7, 138)

¹⁹⁵ See J. Hillis Miller, 'Topography in *The Return of the Native*', *Essays in Literature*, 8:2 (Fall 1981), 119-34; Leslie Grinsell,

audience 'listened to the words of...the speaker' (*RN*, 6.IV); it is not engaged in 'beholding' or 'perusing' his face 'as a page' (*RN*, 2.VI), but the promised 'recognition of the coil of things' (*ib.*) has exacted its material vengeance: 'He wore a shade over his eyes, and his face was pensive and lined...[T]hese bodily features were marked with decay' (*RN*, 6.IV). By this stage, Yeobright's ravaged eyesight has crystallized into a permanent mental and physical dysfunction, and such damage threatens to undermine the narrative perspective. As it is the narrator who sees and relates the action, the protagonist's eyesight is the most important thing, strategically at least, that can be manipulated and ruined. The philosopher destroys the artist's material and unthinking 'beauty' submits to thought's 'decay'.

Yet an uneasy tension remains, Hardy's ambiguous handling of Clym being most obvious in this conclusion. At first it seems as if Hardy applauds rather than castigates his intellectual for not owning that 'well proportioned' mind which distinguishes 'mediocrity' and confers 'happiness' (*RN*, 3.II), but here Yeobright is beheld delivering 'sermons' on 'morally unimpeachable subjects' - a movement toward the mediocre which implies a compromise. His final vocation is neither a moral nor an intellectual victory; nor is it a choice, but a failure enforced by circumstance, and Hardy's covert exposition in the penultimate sentence certifies the necessity of seeing as a means of, and precursor to, understanding: 'it was well enough for a man to take to preaching who could not see to do anything else' (*RN*, 6.III). From an involved standpoint, Clym is a victim of an uncomprehending world: he has been horribly misunderstood; but, when considered objectively, he has been rendered incapable of existing in any effectual way in this environment.

Egdon, as the materialized impression of Hardy's art, mind and philosophy, substantiates the ambiguous intellectual bias of the novel, and its face, wherein the most thinking may read strange matters, invites the kind of inspection which encourages each reader to see in it what they want to see: 'scorpions' to Eustacia are but drops of 'prosy rain' to Thomasin; 'Egdon in the mass' is both vindictive 'monster' and 'impersonal open

ground' (*RN*, 5.VIII). But this is not to imply the workings of a simple perceptual model, and any attempt to find a uniform design is disappointed. In 1893 Bradley was to argue that

Appearance must belong to reality, and it must therefore be concordant and other than it seems. The bewildering mass of phenomenal diversity must hence somehow be at unity and self-consistent; for it cannot be elsewhere than in reality, and reality excludes discord.¹⁹⁶

But in 1878 Hardy refuses to present harmonies where none are felt to exist; he avoids explanation and maintains logical inconsistencies within a continually shifting framework. Whereas Bradley refutes the possibility of 'a plurality of reals' which 'can merely co-exist so as not to be discrepant',¹⁹⁷ Hardy creates a viable series of alternative 'reals', of multiple discrepancies, in Egdon. And the success and potency of his plural vision¹⁹⁸ means that the heath's Northern aesthetic can visually appeal to the 'modern man' while simultaneously accommodating the primitive belief systems and legacies of 'the very rearward of thinkers' (*RN*, 1.VII). The point at which these discordant visions converge brings Egdon into its own.

This unstateable margin of incongruities defines *The Return of the Native's* criticism of nineteenth-century intellectual life, and Hardy's overall response is typically ambivalent and inconclusive. Ignorance is bliss, and certain forms of unorthodox wisdom are humanistically more beneficial than the learning attained by conventional means, yet this painful realization is only granted once the forbidden fruit has been tasted, once an individual's subjective understanding of the reality of its world has been radically altered. The true value of backwardness is seen only when it has been "corrected", but by then the disillusioning process cannot be reversed. Enlightened into darkness, the 'intellectual lens' perceives a phenomenal world recreated along modern lines. And because of its superior presumptions, this eye, seeing its own ignorance, must remain frustrated by the certainty that 'we get only at the true nature of the impression that an object, etc.,

¹⁹⁶ Bradley, 'The General Nature of Reality', in *Appearance and Reality*, Ch. XIII, pp. 135-43 (p. 140).

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

¹⁹⁸ See M.A. Golding, 'Hardy's Double-Visioned Universe', *Essays in Criticism*, VII (Oct. 1957), 376-7.

produces on us, the true thing in itself being still...beyond our knowledge' (*LY*, p. 9; July 1892).

The term 'impression' limits the scope of our knowledge of things to our sensations, and, as far as Hardy's literary aesthetic is concerned, it is conveniently enigmatic. In Shelley's phrase, 'the deep truth is imageless' and exists in a realm where 'the air is no prism', above the screen of sense perceptions and refracted colours 'which those who live call life'.¹⁹⁹ Hume's impressions dissolve into Platonic shadows which insinuate a higher reality beyond them. By redefining truth as an impression, by offering an impression as the viable conclusion to any line of philosophical enquiry, Hardy justifies his assimilation of multiple perspectives on reality in an art form not directed toward invalidating one point of view so as to validate another. In keeping with the empirical philosophers, Hardy may declare sight the supreme faculty, yet it is not synonymous with knowledge any more than blindness is synonymous with ignorance. True seeing, as in 'I see; I understand', has more to do with subjective processes: 'The cognitive operations called thinking are...the essential ingredients of perception itself ...Visual perception is visual thinking'.²⁰⁰ In this context, Clym's impaired vision is symptomatic of an excessive dose of the wrong sort of seeing.

But Hardy was a poetical empiricist who conceived vision as a constructive understanding of reality. In the final analysis, the seeing, knowing and creating of reality in *The Return of the Native* is mediated by the eye of an intellectual perceiver, and, as with the rest of the series, the ontological and epistemological significance of the work's reality depends upon 'the constructions [Hardy's] characters are prepared to put on all they see'.²⁰¹ What they 'put on' is dictated by the means and wants within; they see what they have been taught to see by these wants, whether the result of germinal intuition or acquired learning. And Egdon Heath is the resulting precipitate, a formally inconsistent distillation of two antithetical ways of knowing, a manifestation of an imaginative eye

¹⁹⁹ P.B. Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound* (1820), in *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1905; rpt. 1961), II. iv. 116.

²⁰⁰ Rudolph Arnheim, *Visual Thinking* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 13.

²⁰¹ David Lodge, Introduction to *The Woodlanders* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1977), pp. 18-19.

susceptible to impressions but antagonized by an intellectual eye enamoured of speculative philosophies.

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V

'THE PUBLIC EYE':¹
THE REALITY OF SHAM METAPHORS IN
***THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE* (1886)**

There are sham Metaphors, which overhanging that same Thought's-Body (best naked), and deceptively bedizening, or bolstering it out, may be called its false stuffings, superfluous show-cloaks, and tawdry rags.²

The reality that he has to express resides...not in the superficial appearance of his subject but at a depth at which that appearance means little.³

All that is transitory
 Is but a symbol. (*LN*, III, 2500)⁴

The metaphysical handling that objective phenomena receive in *The Return of the Native* means that Egdon Heath is forwarded as a quasi-psychological reality, an externalized impression visually shaped by the imagination. And though existing primarily as an amorphous, ineffable symbol of the mind, it simultaneously remains an autonomous, unmediated fact. In Egdon's enclosed double-visioned universe, the subjective image predominates, and the real thing-in-itself escapes full comprehension. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, governed by the objectively-orientated 'glare of the public eye' (*MC*, XXXII), this perceptual and ontological emphasis is reversed even while it exploits certain figures. Egdon's sartorial significance is particularly germane: 'in its venerable one coat lay a certain satire on the vanity of human clothes'; its 'antique brown dress' is an 'invariable garment' of clothing which gives visible shape and form to its essence; even the human dwellings are conceived as 'clothing' (*RN*, 1.I).

Hardy reworks the architectural-cum-sartorial metaphor in *A Laodicean*, but its expressive potential is only fully realized in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.⁵ Though the flux of nature is subordinate to the solidity of society and the speculative submits before precise, material details, the noumenal is not abandoned in favour of phenomenal trivia.

¹ *MC*, XXXII.

² Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus: The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh* (1832; London: Chapman & Hall, 1870), Bk. I, Ch. XI. Hereafter cited parenthetically in text as *SR*.

³ Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C.K. Scott-Moncrieff, et al, 3 vols (New York: Random House; London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), III, 916.

⁴ Anon., 'Poet's Criticism', *Daily Chronicle* (May 23, 1903), p. 3.

⁵ The 'social' as opposed to 'natural' environment of *MC* is interesting, especially given that the work was nearly turned down by the publishers on the grounds that 'the lack of gentry among the characters made it uninteresting - a typical estimate of what was, or was supposed to be, mid-Victorian taste' (*EL*, p. 236; May 1886).

Hardy deplored the reductive idea of providing 'a mere photograph' (*EL*, p. 198; June 1882) of life, and took imaginative liberties with Dorchester to create 'a dream-place that never was outside an irresponsible book' (*LY*, p. 144; Sept 1910). Casterbridge, far from being a faithful replica of the real town, 'is [a] fiction stranger than truth',⁶ an artistic sublimation of those elements that matter. "Casterbridge" is a sort of essence of the town as it used to be, "a place more Dorchester than Dorchester itself" (ib.). Such a declaration repeats Hazlitt's anxiety over the objective equivalent of art's subject matter, for the true ideal is not 'an abstraction of general nature'; the quintessential is achieved

by singling out some one thing or leading quality of an object, and making it the pervading and regulating principle of all the rest...[A] thing is not more perfect by becoming something else, but by *being more itself*.⁷

Having extrapolated his personal idea of the 'leading quality' latent in the material source, Hardy distils it in the crucible of his imagination to refine a precipitate of reality. As contemporary critics noted, 'all these lineaments, which, mingled together as Mr Hardy has mingled them, produce a curiously strong impression of reality'⁸ and a narrative which lingers in the reader's memory, 'mixing itself with his impressions and recollections of real scenes and people just as a very vivid dream will sometimes do'.⁹ In no other work does so much hinge on 'lineaments' and 'real scenes'. Peripherals are accepted as infallible indicators of essentials, yet Hardy hypothesizes no simple division between present fact and speculative interpretation. The problem is a challenging perceptual conundrum given Hardy's inconsistent though disturbingly logical conclusion that material is immaterial and of provisional importance. Yet matter matters; 'actuality is all important'.¹⁰

Casterbridge's futuristic, superficial outlook has subverted the archaic view of its former 'imaginative inhabitants' (*MC*, XI),¹¹ and is clearly adumbrated in Henchard's

⁶ Anon., *Saturday Review*, LXI (May 29, 1886), 757.

⁷ William Hazlitt, 'The Ideal', in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P.P. Howe, 21 vols (London and Toronto: Dent 1930-34), XX, 302-6 (pp. 303-4).

⁸ R.H. Hutton, *Spectator* (June 5, 1886), 752-3; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 145-150 (I, 146).

⁹ Anon., *Athenaeum* (May 29, 1886), 711; rpt. *Thomas Hardy: Critical Assessments*, ed. Graham Clarke, 4 vols (Sussex: Helm Information, 1994), I, 141-2 (I, 141). Hereafter cited as *TH:CA*.

¹⁰ John Lucas, *The Literature of Change: Studies in the Nineteenth-Century Provincial Novel* (Brighton: Harvester Press; Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble, 1977), p. 159.

¹¹ Borrowing his terms of reference from Toynbee, Donald Davison, 'Futurism and Archaism in Toynbee and Hardy', *Still Rebels, Still*

cynical condemnation: "It is not by what is, in this life, but by what appears, that you are judged" (*MC*, XXV), a sentiment which recognizes that humanity is divided by the antagonistic demands of the artificial front fabricated by 'the public eye' and the genuine inner life. Nature's 'essential laws' confront those 'framed merely as social expedients... without a basis in the heart of things' (*CEF*, p. 127), and for most Casterbridge folk, outer conduct and mien possess more worth, validity and meaning than the internal condition; 'psychology is, as it were, externalized'.¹²

In a typical Hardyan paradox, the only reliable perspective on life's 'contrarious inconsistencies' (*MC*, XLIV) is 'the persistence of the unforeseen' (*MC*, IV). Those familiar with such juxtapositions meet them with equanimity and assurance, but the 'contrivances and confusions which delighted the eye by their quaintness, and in a measure reasonableness', are beheld as 'novelties to the unpractised eyes' (*MC*, IX) of relative newcomers like Elizabeth-Jane. It is the 'reasonableness' born of custom, of Hume's 'repeated perceptions',¹³ that renders strange objects and events commonplace; the indigenous populace has been optically numbed to these incongruities by over-exposure. Assaults initiated by the imaginative against the 'reasonable' faculty may be pushed out of 'respectable' sight, yet the very act of concealment exposes its deceptive purpose. It is all for show.

These conventions modulate our understanding of 'the Casterbridge stage' (*MC*, XLIII); after all, *totus mundis, agit histrionem*, and here the metaphor of the *theatrum mundi* is a lived fact. Everyone assumes a role from the *dramatis personae* in life's great performance, and smaller enterprizes are enacted in sub-theatres: the buildings. Hardy's dramatic approach revises Carlyle's architectural thesis in *Sartor Resartus* (1832),¹⁴ for

not a Hut [man] builds but is the visible embodiment of a Thought; but

Yankees, and Other Essays (Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1957), pp. 62-83, sees the world of the novel as rooted in the antithesis between the 'Futurist bias' and 'Archaist' sympathies (p. 68).

¹² J.B. Bullen, *The Expressive Eye: Fiction and Perception in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 170.

¹³ David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature* (1739), ed. T.H. Green and T.H. Grose, 2 vols (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1874), I, 487.

¹⁴ Hardy may also have been familiar with Gottfried Semper's work. In *The Architect* (Oct 18, 1884; Dec 20, 1884), similarities were made clear between Semper's reference to buildings as a variation on 'ornament' and what Carlyle said about the symbolic significance of clothes in *Sartor Resartus*. Each instance implies that Carlyle's treatise was a response to Semper's ideas. Harvey wrote that 'Semper first gave out his theory of the art of clothing as the basis of art about the year 1831. Carlyle...wrote his *Sartor Resartus* in 1832' ('Gottfried Semper', *The Architect*, 32 (Dec 1884), 244). This is probably incorrect since *Sartor Resartus* was published in 1832 and Semper's work in 1834. The association of the names, however, was probably sufficient to encourage Hardy to read the work.

bears the visible record of invisible things; but is, in the transcendental sense, symbolical as well as real. (SR, III. III)

The Mayor of Casterbridge is Hardy's response to Carlyle's proposition that the material world is a reflective container of the immaterial. All structures, be they hovels, tents or mansions, forge a conceptual and physical bond with their inhabitants' public standing and private temperament,¹⁵ yet the metaphor's ideological foundation does not swamp the primacy of the human connection: 'The human interest in an edifice ranks before its architectural interest, however great the latter may be'.¹⁶ As a suggestive, visual strategy which establishes the work's thematic duality, the architectural figure presents a range of two-dimensional facades: to 'the public eye' (MC, XXXII), buildings are simply buildings; to 'the philosophic eye' (SR, I. XI), they externalize a profound reality.

The most curious construction of this dualism is the enigmatic luxuriance of Lucetta's abode. Its 'grey facade' projects respectability, but its 'irregularities of surface' (and Hardy 'knew that in architecture cunning irregularity is of enormous worth' (LY, p. 78; Jan 1899)) reveal something of the "unforseen" (ib.) in its anomalous sub-structure. As 'a compilation rather than a design' (MC, XXI), the Hall is an artificial example of indifferent eclecticism, but it is not excessive; it hovers on the brink and 'a timely consciousness of the ultimate vanity of human architecture, no less than of other things', stops it from slipping into 'artistic superfluity' (MC, XXI). Though its 'reasonableness' appears reassuring, there remains the uncomfortable implication that the 'architecture of the front' (ib.), concealing the real goings-on at the back, has more in sympathy with the 'inhabitant it screened' than initially thought.

To shield, to hide, is a theatrical imperative, yet the mask is the building's true face. As deformed and 'ghastly' as the 'gargoyle' of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, the face on the 'key-stone' comments on the perfidious energy of the histrionic scaffolding:

¹⁵ Peter Easingwood, 'The Mayor of Casterbridge and the Irony of Literary Production', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, IX:3 (Oct 1993), 64-75, argues against 'a unitary social landscape' (p. 70), and sees more of a division between nature and society. For further discussions, see Noorul Hasan, *Thomas Hardy: The Sociological Imagination* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 68-72, who applies Tocqueville's *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (Community and Association) to MC. See also Anne Alexander, 'Man and Society', in *Thomas Hardy: The 'Dream-Country' of his Fiction* (London: Vision Press; Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble, 1987), pp. 156-65.

¹⁶ Hardy, 'Memories of Church Restoration', in *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, ed. Harold Orel (London: Macmillan, 1978), pp. 203-18 (p. 207). Here walls are 'bow-legged and knock-kneed' (MC, IX), and bridges have 'speaking countenances' (MC, XXXII); and in TD, the 'bricks and mortar' of Talbothays' buildings 'throb with a burning sensibility' (TD, XXV).

Originally the mask had exhibited a comic leer...but generations of Casterbridge boys had thrown stones...[and] chipped off the lips and jaws as if they had been eaten away by disease. (*MC*, XXI)

The black comedy of the vandalism is a tragic parody of the biblical stoning of the prostitute, the 'scarlet' woman, a fabulous trial to be re-enacted at the skimmity-ride.¹⁷ Though there is something 'queer' and 'odd' in this gruesome "prop", this 'unpleasant feature' avows the ugly truth and may, in the context of unwanted pregnancies (the Hall has witnessed the disappearance of 'nameless infants'), imply a sexual terror or disfiguring 'disease'. Yet the 'mask', however horrific, and its wearer, however artful, are victims. To what extent is Lucetta a woman more sinned against than sinning? The entertainment intended by the skimmity proves fatal, the lives of Lucetta and another 'nameless infant' being forfeit, and just as the 'mask' is thoughtlessly defaced, so is Lucetta during her fretful strutting upon 'the Casterbridge stage' (*MC*, XLIV).¹⁸

Corrupt house-fronts insinuate corrupt conduct. Millgate's observation that buildings function 'almost as a measure or standard of morality'¹⁹ echoes Hardy's note from Balzac that 'architecture is the expression of morals' (*LN*, I, 262)²⁰ and his alleged claim that 'people make buildings in their own image'.²¹ Overseeing one of the less reputable alleys, the mask is emblematic of 'the one thing above all others appertaining to the mansion's past history - intrigue' (*MC*, XXI), no less than its serving as a clear signal of the dubious 'past history' of Lucetta herself. Here the covert confession of moral duplicity is indomitably a self-conscious irony pointing to the crux of the matter, particularly given the admission that 'chicanery, subterfuge, had hardly any place in the streets of this honest borough to all appearance' (*MC*, IX). Lucetta's occupancy of a type-cast building exhibits the discrepancy between society's version of the real, and the genuine article. Just as her residence is an extension of her own behaviour - 'her curtains

¹⁷ For a positive rather than an appalled critical assessment of the skimmington, see Florence E. Baer, 'Folklore and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 19 (1990), 34-43 (pp. 39-41).

¹⁸ Cp. Lucetta and Matilda Johnson, the actress with a past who is also prone to wearing green and carrying a parasol, in *The Trumpet Major*: 'I hold the world but as the world... a stage where every man must play a part, and mine a sad one!' (*TM*, XXXVI); and King George: 'It's but a stage, a type of all the world' (*D*, I.IV.i).

¹⁹ Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist* (London: Bodley Head; New York: Ransom House, 1971), p. 113.

²⁰ Honoré de Balzac, 'The Imaginary Mistress', Hardy's edn. unidentified, p. 128.

²¹ C.J.P. Beatty, 'The Part Played by Architecture in the Life and Work of Thomas Hardy' (Unpub. dissertation, University of London, 1963, p. 2), cited by Bullen, *The Expressive Eye*, p. 162 n. 37. This observation follows on from numerous critical references to the fact that the conception and construction of *MC* and *Max Gate* occurred simultaneously. But even before this, Hardy's first publication, 'How I Built Myself a House' (1865), combined literature and architecture.

seemed to hang sllily, as if they screened an ousting presence' (MC, XXVI) - so the reader is initially directed to evaluate character on the arbitrary basis of surface observation.

The retention of a respectable veneer²² has more to do with the social register than moral conduct, and as Kiely appreciates, 'the way people look at themselves and one another is the central concern of the novel. What each character sees defines, to a great extent, what he is'.²³ Unlike the majority of Hardy's protagonists, Henchard is a social not an individual construct; Moore finds him 'a fantastically objective character whose subjectivity is superficial and therefore deeply problematic'.²⁴ Henchard, in his sheer exteriority, prefers realism over idealism, dramatic spectacles over imaginative truths, things over thoughts. Though his world is thus realized upon the same specular criteria, his determined preservation of a social front is continually thwarted by the narrator's determination to snatch it away. Hardy's original, objective sketch of the poor labourer is true to Henchard's natural state and is kept before the reader's inner eye so that subsequent, falsified portraits are viewed in its light. The surface is at variance with the reality, and his donning the role of respectable/well-dressed Mayor is a farce hiding the less pleasant character of the wife-seller.

The gradual emergence of this truth, and the erosion of those fraudulent outer layers, form the plot of a life which is a compounded histrionic catastrophe, a monumental drama that is created in the first instance by a watcher. As Goode points out:

All Henchard's decisive acts are theatrical and the story is constructed around them...The self-begotten, arranged, significant and egocentric gesture is the dominant unifying force of the narrative...This theatricality does not enter and transform the novel: it is the very condition of its existence.²⁵

²² There are repeated references by characters to 'degradation / scandal / humiliation / social catastrophe / reputation / respectability / disgrace / indignity / local repute'.

²³ Robert Kiely, 'Vision and Viewpoint in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 23 (Sept 1968), 189-200 (p. 190).

²⁴ Kevin Z. Moore, *The Descent of the Imagination: Postromantic Culture in the Later Novels of Thomas Hardy* (London and New York: New York University Press, 1990), p. 53. For a full discussion of Henchard's character, see Jane Adamson, 'Who and What is Henchard? - Henchard's Character and Moral Enquiry', *Critical Review*, 31 (1991), 47-74.

²⁵ John Goode, *Thomas Hardy: The Offensive Truth* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), p. 79. See also my 'Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, or, *Totus Mundis, Agit Histrionem*', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 26 (Dec 1997), 34-42.

Henchard's need to be the visual centre of attention, rather than identifying him, forces him into an existence dependent on continual displacement and illusion. The structure of his life is built upon fluid, unstable foundations and leaves him with nothing solid or real to build from or hold on to. Though he surrounds himself with material artefacts to lull himself into a (false) sense of phenomenal substantiality, the narrator's antithetical perspective subverts their physical realness by contemplating their transience and insignificance; though his perceptual dysfunction blinds him to the incompatibility of theatrical Art and actual Life, it empowers him to manipulate the histrionic potential of any arena. Within his world of semi make-believe, Henchard seizes every opportunity to abnegate serious responsibility and culpability, the Weydon-Priors scenario prologuing the drama.²⁶

An oasis in the midst of the mundane, the fair is a dangerous anomaly which relaxes the laws governing prosaic realities. Its illusive influence guarantees that the 'dramatic glare' (MC, XXXI) of the first 'act' increases with each successive declaration of real intent from the drunken leading man and the predictable response from an audience willing to suspend disbelief and engage themselves in the scheme of one acceptable deception: acting.²⁷ Yet Henchard is a Carlylean anti-hero who abuses the sanctity of the Heroic Voice, his rhetoric constituting a grand hypocrisy.²⁸ 'Why not insist...that all speech be a reality; that every speaker be verily what he pretends or play-acts to be?'²⁹ All, watchers and watched, are implicated in the set-up, but the illusion of a performance is so tentative that it collapses with the entrance of an earnest player. Hitherto, 'the spectators had indeed taken the proceedings throughout as a piece of mirthful irony carried to extremes', but the spell is broken once Newson introduces real props into this fragile world: 'The sight of real money...had a great effect upon the

²⁶ See Michael Taft, 'Hardy's Manipulation of Folklore and Literary Imagination: the Case of the Wife Sale in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', *Studies in the Novel*, 13:4 (Winter 1981), 399-407; Leonora Epstein, 'Sale and Sacrament: The Wife Auction in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', *English Language Notes*, 24:4 (1987), 50-6.

²⁷ 'A headstrong blindness to contingencies

Carries the actor on, and serves him well

In some nice issues clearer sight would mar'. (D, 1.III.i)

²⁸ From *hypocrites*, the Greek word for 'actor'.

²⁹ J.A. Froude, *Thomas Carlyle: A History of His Life in London, 1834-1881*, 2 vols (London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1884), II, 385.

spectators. Their eyes became riveted upon the faces of the chief actors, and then upon the notes' (*MC*, I).

The notes and coins, 'the real cash',³⁰ which ratify the transaction are, as Fisher indicates, 'an additional and very fundamental subversion of a fiction which makes a claim to "realism"'.³¹ Vernon also forwards a persuasive account of nineteenth-century novels confessing to represent reality and the similar claim of paper money to represent 'things of (presumably) enduring value: gold and silver'.³² This concatenation of things and meanings shows Hardy in full dramatic and visual control, the attentive 'spectators' directing the reader's eye, the precision of the design generating a convincing anti-realism. In the present instance, histrionic facts, not easily dispelled, spill into the real world. Dramatic irony underpins Henchard's stupefied contemplation of the 'act just ended' and his relative position in the macrocosmic 'scene':

The sun had recently set, and the west was hung with a rosy cloud, which seemed permanent, yet slowly changed. To watch it was like looking at some grand feat of stagery from a darkened auditorium. (*MC*, I)³³

The transience of ideal stasis accounts for the introduction's dream-like quality, and Henchard falls into a profound sleep. A slumber steals his spirit and when he wakes he is reduced to a living body merely (in the Carlylean sense of the 'earthy' man) and 'behold[s] the world as a new thing', one deprived of all personal correspondences. From this point on, an external realm composed of 'things' essentially fixed, 'silent and still as death' is emphasized, the accusatory, mute reality of the props - wedding-ring and bank- notes - verifying that Henchard's 'dim memories...were not dreams' (*MC*, II).

The re-enactment of the opening at first persuades us that little has changed,³⁴ but whereas the double-take of Susan and Elizabeth-Jane attends to the visual correlation

³⁰ The selling of Susan and the baby Elizabeth-Jane bears a striking resemblance to the abandoning of the baby Teufelsdröckh with the 'roll of gold Friedrichs' to pay for his upkeep. The child is thus "sold", later thinks about the person 'that glided into the Orchard Cottage...and then, as on spirit's wings, glided out again' (cp. the swallow in the tent), and wonders about his 'unknown father' (*SR*, II.1) in much the same way that Elizabeth-Jane is tragically embroiled in the pursuit of the truth surrounding her paternity.

³¹ Joe Fisher, *The Hidden Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1992), p. 122. See the whole chapter, 'The Mayor of Casterbridge: Made of Money', pp. 115-35.

³² John Vernon, *Money and Fiction: Literary Realism in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (New York, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 7.

³³ Cp. *TT* where the stars are seen as the 'invisible multitude in the back rows of the celestial theatre' (Ch. 8).

³⁴ Dickens makes an apposite comment at the start of chapter 17 of *Oliver Twist* (1838), ed. Kathleen Tillotson (London: Clarendon Press, 1966). The brief defence considers the relationship between dramatic and fictional art, and life, particularly where abrupt changes

of the two images, that of Henchard accentuates the disparity: 'He was dressed in an old-fashioned evening suit, an expanse of frilled shirt', and adorned with an amplitude of 'jewelled studs, and a heavy gold chain' (MC, V).³⁵ Well might Elizabeth-Jane remark, 'Did ever anything go more by contraries!' (ib.). These discrepancies are disruptive, but unlike traditional realistic fiction which papers over the cracks, Hardy takes advantage of them and works with 'the antique awkwardness, crookedness, and obscurity' (MC, VII) upon which *The Three Mariners* is built. One of the achievements of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is its integration of repeated visual inconsistencies: 'a compilation is the design of the novel'.³⁶

Repetition...represent[s] the intensity of existence that Hardy wants. This intensity is suggested by the structure of the novel; it is supported metaphorically by the setting...and it is actual in the real, literal, and specific juxtaposition of past and present.³⁷

Simple linearity does not exist in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*; it is an artificial way of viewing the living narrative where events are recursive rather than sequential. The work is 'time-pressed' (MC, IX), staged upon a 'past-marked prospect' (MC, XIII), and past issues, communal history and individual memory 'are brought into a complex relationship with the present which gives the novel an integration, thematic and structural, not found elsewhere in Hardy's fiction'.³⁸ This doubling back and forth

of scene are concerned: 'Such changes [on stage] appear absurd; but they are not so unnatural as they would seem at first sight. The transitions in real life...are not a whit less startling; only, there, we are busy actors, instead of passive lookers-on, which makes a vast difference. The actors in the mimic life of the theatre are blind to violent transitions and abrupt impulses of passion or feeling, which, presented before the eyes of mere spectators, are at once condemned as outrageous and preposterous'. This offers an anticipatory validation of the dramatic licence found in MC on such matters. Dickens continues to argue that 'sudden shiftings of the scene, and rapid changes of time and place, are not only sanctioned in books by long usage, but are by many considered as the great art of authorship'. Hardy artfully takes full advantage of this 'great art'. Hardy's references to Dickens are relatively few (see, for example, 'Dorset in London' (1908), in *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, pp. 218-25 (p. 221), *EL*, pp. 69-70, 101). When asked to contribute to 'Charles Dickens: Some Personal Recollections and Opinions' in 1912, Hardy answered that, although he had attended readings by Dickens...he did not know Dickens personally, and his literary efforts did not owe much to his influence. "No doubt they owed something unconsciously, since everybody's did in those days" ('Appendix: Minor Writings', in *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, pp. 241-56 (p. 246, n. 25)).

³⁵ These are 'clothes with tapestries of rhetoric / Disguising their real web of commonplace' (*D*, I.I.iii). Moreover, the 'gold' has a definite link with the 'real cash' which paid for Susan, and Henchard has himself been falsely "coined": 'They are all as bank-notes, the social dignitaries, all representing gold; - and several of them...always are forged notes' (Carlyle, 'Lecture I: The Hero as Divinity', in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, & the Heroic in History* (1841), intro. Michael K. Goldberg (Oxford and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 3-36 (p. 12)).

³⁶ Norman D. Prentiss, 'Compilation and Design in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XI:1 (Feb 1995), 60-74 (p. 60). See also Dale Kramer, 'Character and the Cycle of Change in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', *Tennessee Studies in Literature*, 16 (1971), 111-20; J. Gerard Dollar, 'The "Looped Orbit" of the Mayor of Casterbridge', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 19:3 (1983), 293-308.

³⁷ Bert G. Hornback, *The Metaphor of Chance: Vision and Technique in the Works of Thomas Hardy* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1971), p. 90.

³⁸ Rod Edmond, 'The Past-Marked Prospect': Reading *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Reading the Victorian Novel: Detail into Form*, ed. Ian Gregor (London: Vision Press, 1980), pp. 111-27 (p. 111). See also L. MacKenzie Osborne, 'The "Chronological Frontier" in Thomas Hardy's Novels', *Studies in the Novel*, 4:4 (Winter 1972), 543-55, who interprets the clash between ancient and modern by contrasting two concepts of time - preserver and destroyer. The Victorian present is destructively eradicating the ancient Wessex. Fred Reid, 'Wayfarers and Seafarers: Ideas of History in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XIII:3 (Oct 1997), 47-57,

generates an impression of alternately shrinking and expanding visions, and it is 'the layering of time, the years between, that helps to create the perspective within which we read, and extend the novelist's meaning'.³⁹ The prefatory enjoinder to 'bear in mind' the contiguity of past and present allows the seemingly separate parts of the story to converge to develop this meaning. When Henchard quits Casterbridge for the final time and 'formed...much the same picture as he had presented when entering' (*MC*, XLIII),⁴⁰ the cyclical frame of reference is satisfied and the novel reaches the 'spherical completeness of perfect art' (*EL*, p. 223; April 1885). Thematically it suggests that 'the interspace of years was unperceived' (*MC*, XXXI); ontologically it implies that his time there was more fantastic than real.

The link is made through costume,⁴¹ a symbol 'in which 'there is concealment and yet revelation', for 'it is in and through *Symbols* that man, consciously or unconsciously, lives, works, and has his being' (*SR*, III.III). Hardy sanctions Carlyle's differentiation between symbols which 'have both an extrinsic and intrinsic value; oftenest the former only', and teases out the paradox that, though 'National or other sectarian Costumes and Customs' are the visible expression of a higher idea, 'intrinsic significance, these had none; only extrinsic' (*ib.*). Henchard's inner self may be betrayed by the 'jewelled studs' and 'heavy gold chain' which symbolize the 'exaggerated' identity of his 'social standing' and conventional respectability, but it cannot be eradicated. He is the protean Carlylean hero, 'changing in shape, but in essence unchangeable',⁴² and however 'artificially intensified' (*MC*, V) he is by his role as 'Mayor', there is 'still the same...stuff beneath the rind of Michael Henchard' (*MC*, XVII).

analyses the novel against three Victorian concerns: 'the optimism of the "march of mind"...the threatening fatalism of oscillating cycles [and]...the idea of history as a vast sea or ocean' (p. 47). Earl Ingersoll, 'Writing and Memory in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', *English Literature in Transition*, 33:3 (1990), 299-309, applies Derrida's *Dissemination*. 'Writing' is considered a 'supplement to / replacement' for 'speaking'. See also Mark M. Hennelly, 'The Unknown "Character" of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', *Journal of Evolutionary Psychology*, 16:1-2 (March 1995), 92-101. Hennelly studies various forms of writing and letter-writing in the novel, and applies Derridean theories to a number of passages.

³⁹ Ian Gregor, *The Great Web: The Form of Hardy's Major Fiction* (London: Faber & Faber, 1974), p. 133.

⁴⁰ In this respect the technique is very different from Moore's ostentatious use of it in *Esther Waters* (1894) where the opening paragraph is repeated when the heroine returns to Woodview four chapters from the end.

⁴¹ See Rachel Worth, 'Thomas Hardy and Rural Dress', *Costume*, 29 (1995), 55-67. This study of Hardy's novels, poems and journals makes a significant contribution to our knowledge of changes in rural dress in the nineteenth century, and the validity of Hardy's descriptions is endorsed by other sources such as photographs and surviving dress. Hardy provides unique evidence relating to how and when certain clothes were worn and the extent to which dress was an indication of class and social status, as well as being expressive of the wearers' individuality.

⁴² Carlyle, 'Sir Walter Scott' (1838), in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, ed. H.D. Traill, 5 vols (London: Chapman & Hall, 1899; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1969), IV, 22-87 (p. 24).

Carlyle's 'world in clothes' in *Sartor Resartus* saturates *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, both exegeses offering 'a mixture of insights, inspiration, with dullness, double-vision, and even utter blindness' (SR, I.IV) on the hypothesis that 'the whole External Universe and what it holds is but Clothing; and the essence of all Science lies in the PHILOSOPHY OF CLOTHES' (SR, I.XI). Hardy conceives and sees the novel and its environment in these terms: in the borough we 'see motley life in modern trappings dressed' (LN, '1867', entry 55),⁴³ the main road is 'a stripe on an undulating garment' (MC, XXIX), Yalbury Wood 'clothed the heights on either side' (MC, XL), and the market swarms with 'a little world of leggings, switches and sample bags' (MC, XXII). Garments, indicative of a collective, cultural assumption, bear 'the impressions of analogous influences, such as the taste, character, and civilization of a people'.⁴⁴ Objects bind society - '*Man is a Spirit...bound by invisible bonds to All Men*' - and are representational as well as practical, but clothes are the 'visible emblems of that fact' (SR, I.IX).

As 'Society is founded upon cloth' and raiment is 'a tissue woven by men as an emblem of the connection between them' (SR, I.IX), deprivation of this insignia severs the social link and the equivalent status. Despite their material existence, costumes are as ephemeral as the abstractions they represent and, without warning, 'as by some enchanter's wand...the Clothes fly-off'; eminent persons, left with 'not a shirt on them' (ib.), are abandoned in a state of sartorial and official *deshabille*.⁴⁵ Henchard's violation of society's *mores* by symbolically divesting himself of his wedding-ring enables Mrs Goodenough, Hardy's 'enchanter', to strip him of his title and confer the 'official gold chain with great square links' (MC, XXXVII) on Farfrae.⁴⁶ Metaphorically, this gesture

⁴³ Samuel Johnson, 'The Vanity of Human Wishes', line 51.

⁴⁴ Anon., 'Semper's Theory of Architectural Ornament', *The Builder*, 47 (1884), 821.

⁴⁵ It is also possible that Hardy had a moment of Dickensian sartorial speculation in mind. Mr Bumble, the famous parochial beadle, is divested of his office, of his very identity, once his defining cocked-hat is removed. 'There are some promotions in life,' muses the narrator, 'which, independent of the more substantial rewards they offer, acquire peculiar value and dignity from the coats and waistcoats connected with them. A field-marshal has his uniform, a bishop his silk apron, a councillor his silk gown, a beadle his cocked-hat. Strip the bishop of his apron, or the beadle of his hat and lace; what are they? Men. Mere men. Dignity, and even holiness, too, sometimes, are more questions of coat and waistcoat than some people imagine' (*Oliver Twist*, Ch. 36). This is precisely the argument forwarded by Carlyle and Hardy.

⁴⁶ Farfrae seems a paler reflection of Schiller whose 'greatest faculty', according to Carlyle, 'was a half-poetical, half-philosophical imagination' (*The Life of Friedrich Schiller* (1825; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1969), p.192). There exists the possibility that Farfrae may be a less developed Fitzpiers; there is even the use of an embryonic rainbow image: 'The curious double strands of Farfrae's thread of life - the commercial and the romantic - were very distinct at times...like the colours in a variegated cord whose contrasts could be seen intertwined, yet not mingled' (MC, XXIII).

exposes a 'deep-seated Sansculottism' (SR, I.III), and relegates the Mayor to the level of his own victim, his essential nakedness being prophesized in his command that Whittle attend work minus his trousers. And in each case, Farfrae's taking possession of the displaced emblem suggests that he belongs among 'that "Armament of Mechanisers" and Unbelievers, threatening to strip us bare!' (SR, III.V).

Carlyle's premise that 'Clothes, as despicable as we think them, are so unspeakably significant' (SR, I.XI) underpins Hardy's biography:

No meanest object is insignificant...All visible things are emblems; what thou seest is not there on its own account; strictly taken, it is not there at all: Matter exists...to represent some Idea, and *body* it forth...What is man himself, and his whole terrestrial Life, but an Emblem; a clothing or visible Garment for that divine ME of his, cast hither, like a light-particle, down from heaven? Thus is he said also to be clothed with a Body. (SR, I.XI)⁴⁷

The Self is 'a moving Rag-screen, overheaped with Shreds and tatters raked from the Charnel-house of Nature' (SR, I.VIII). Swamped by things which identify and bespeak our personalities, we think we have answered the question, 'Who am I?' (ib.), but, as with buildings, clothes express an inconsistent ontology; *The Mayor of Casterbridge* works at the place where these juxtapositions meet. Carlyle warns that garments will 'make Clothes-screens of us' (SR, I.V) if we confuse superficialities and essentials; Hardy illustrates mankind's general culpability. 'The material is not the real - only the visible, the real being invisible optically' (EL, p. 243; Feb 1887), he declared in emulation of Carlyle's *Last Words*, 'It is only the invisible that really is, but only the gifted sense can of itself discern this reality.'⁴⁸ This 'gifted sense' is 'the philosophic eye' (SR, I.XI) which, 'looking at all Matter and Material things as Spirits' (SR, I.IV), sees 'all objects... as windows' (SR, I.XI). Antipathetic to the scientific eye, this poetic 'sincerity & depth of vision' (LN, I, 1404) can 'penetrate through obscurity and confusion to seize the characteristic features of an object' (LN, I, 1406).⁴⁹ Hardy persuades us into this belief by withdrawing it, by allowing the surface 'glare of the public eye' (MC, XXXII) free reign. Excess

⁴⁷ 'Is not the body more than raiment?' asks Oscar Wilde (*De Profundis* (1905; London: Methuen & Co., 1949), p. 107).

⁴⁸ *Last Words of Thomas Carlyle* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1892), p. 36.

⁴⁹ Thomas Carlyle, 'The Hero as Poet', *On Heroes and Hero-Worship*, in *Thomas Carlyle's Collected Works*, 31 vols, Library Edition (London: Chapman & Hall, 1869-72), XII, 99; *The Life of Friedrich Schiller*, in *Works*, V, 37 respectively.

exposes insufficiency, and it is characteristic of Hardy to argue for one thing by charting the inadequacy of its antithesis.

To deceive us into believing existence as substantial, Hardy fills *le neant* with countless accessories. Interminably listed trivia clutter up the text and impede the flow of the narrative; we tire of falling over things left lying around the backstage of this lived theatre,⁵⁰ Casterbridge is just a tiring-house. Exasperated, and discomforted, we see their meaninglessness; it is just so much stuff. But even then it is not so simple, for phenomena indicate a world with precision and impart an imagistic significance to the work's structure: 'the agricultural and pastoral character of the people...was shown by the class of object displayed' in the various windows and narrated in seemingly interminable lists (*MC*, IV).⁵¹ Man is 'like a waste rag...Nevertheless, he can use Tools, can devise Tools...Without Tools he is nothing, with Tools he is all' (*SR*, I. V), is somebody. Commensurate with Farfrae's arrival, 'the scales' steel yards began to be busy' (*MC*, XXXI); Henchard plays 'second fiddle' (*MC*, XVI) to Farfrae, and their commercial combat is imagined as 'the dirk against the cudgel' (*MC*, XVII); when Henchard finally departs, he 'refurbishes' (*MC*, XLIV) himself with the Tools betokening his real trade and self, his hay-knife and wimble, the true emblems which never really 'fly-off'.⁵²

Costume changes are maximized for Henchard and Lucetta, and minimized for Elizabeth-Jane and Farfrae. Only at the fair does Farfrae don 'the costume of a wild Highlander', but he immediately 'disappear[s] for a time to return to his natural garments' (*MC*, XVI). Farfrae knows when a performance is simply a performance; Henchard tries to live it for real, and though he stands to lose the fancy-dress competition to Lucetta, the Carlylean prescription ensures his victory: 'the two sexes vie with each other in this art of Decoration; and as usual the stronger carries it' (*SR*, I. VII). As early as 1871 Hardy used sartorial sensibility to differentiate the sexes: for a man 'there is no fetishism

⁵⁰ See chapter 3, 'Theatrical Arts', in Joan Grundy's *Hardy and the Sister Arts* (London: Macmillan, 1979), for a consideration of Hardy's employment of this form. Grundy considers theatre, melodrama, harlequinade and pantomime but, rather surprisingly, ignores the potential wealth offered by the skimmity-ride (which synthesizes all four) in *MC*, and only allocates a cursory glance at the other dramatic or theatrical moments in that novel.

⁵¹ George Eliot uses the same technique to realize the solidity of the Hall Farm, along with its inhabitants, in *Adam Bede* (1859), ed. Stephen Gill (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980). In accepting the narrator's invitation to 'put your face to one of the glass panes in the right-hand window', the reader/observer perceives a hoard of objects: 'Several clothes-horses, a pillion, spinning-wheel, and an old box wide open, and stuffed full of coloured rags...' (I. 6).

⁵² Farfrae is also responsible for the introduction of the harvesting machine, another Tool. See Earl G. Ingersol, 'Troping and the Machine in Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', *University of Hartford Studies in Literature*, 22:2-3 (1990), 59-67.

in his idea of [clothes] - they are still only a covering he uses... something exterior' (*DR*, 8.4, 13.3), but their importance to women is 'a perplexing contradiction...[H]er dress is part of her body' (*DR*, 13.3, 8.4). Manston's suggestive brushing of Cytherea's dress becomes Troy's aggressive 'hurting' of Bathsheba's skirts, but when Farfrae blows the chaff from Elizabeth-Jane's outer layers she gives no sexual response; her clothes are just clothes. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* thus marks a significant departure, and despite its inordinate emphasis on attire there is, as Garson points out, 'no sense of heavy texture, no rustling of silken skirts, no garments which define the boundaries of the body, no textile which takes on a life of its own.'⁵³ In Ebbatson's estimation too, 'clothing acts primarily...within a framework of class notation rather than as an erotic signal'.⁵⁴

Hardy's class-conscious heroines are 'particularly regardful of those sorry trifles, her robe, her flowers, her veil, her gloves' (*DR*, 13.3), but Elizabeth-Jane disregards such publicly-significant trivia. 'His eye full on Elizabeth's clothes', Henchard divines her financial situation and contemplates how she will appear to 'Casterbridge eyes' (*MC*, X). Once the 'strait-waistcoat of poverty' (*MC*, IV) is cast aside and affluence affords the chance of obtaining 'nice personal possessions and ornaments' (*MC*, XIV), the narrative assumption is that she will 'go and make a fool of herself by dress'. But her 'reasonableness' is 'nowhere more conspicuous than in this question of clothes' and her 'innate perceptiveness' of the essential/sartorial connection dissuades her from 'clothing herself in puffings and nick-knacks'. To do so would be 'inconsistent' (*ib.*) with who and what she knows she is.

Though Elizabeth-Jane 'occupied...an inner chamber of ideas' and seems 'to have slight need for visible objects' (*MC*, XV), she is fallible and succumbs to the temptation of trying (on) a new persona. Though the acquiescence is a socially expedient 'artistic indulgence', it is still a disingenuous action with serious ethical implications. Fraudulent practice encourages a similar response from 'the public eye' which perceives her gesture as acceptance of a leading role in the charade: 'Everybody was attracted, and some said that her bygone simplicity was the art that conceals art...She had produced an effect, a

⁵³ Marjorie Garson, *Hardy's Fables of Integrity: Woman, Body, Text* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 96-7.

⁵⁴ Roger Ebbatson, *Thomas Hardy: The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Penguin Critical Studies (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1994), p. 102.

contrast, and it had been done on purpose' (MC, XV). As Hardy later noted, 'directly the constructive stage is entered upon, Art - high or low - begins to exist' (SF, p. 134). Synonymous with artfulness, deception and a reductive view of reality, Casterbridge Art is of the lowest order. The players begin with the aphorism, "'*Ars est celare artem*"' (EL, p. 138; March 1875), and conclude that 'la simplicité affectée est une imposture délicate':⁵⁵ the 'art that conceals art' is a cunning perpetuation of visual forgery and Elizabeth-Jane is guilty. But the narrator's brusque interposition counters such an accusation: 'As a matter of fact, this was not true, but...as soon as Casterbridge thought her artful it thought her worth notice' (MC, XV). Sensible of the town's exclusive appreciation of dishonesty, Elizabeth-Jane's 'usual fear of exaggerating appearances engendered a deep sadness. "There is something wrong in all this," she mused', and she 'despises' her irresponsibility (ib.).

However, despite her ethical scrupulousness, she duplicates the 'structure' because it has 'attracted' the gaze of Farfrae, and it is only when Art rather than Nature is cast back in the mirror that she despairs of the subterfuge. Unlike 'a woman's eye' which is 'ruled...largely by the superficies of things' (MC, XXXVII),⁵⁶ Elizabeth-Jane perceives the disjunction between the natural honesty of 'the informing spirit' and the social pretension of 'the pretty outside', her clarity of vision offsetting Lucetta's blatant perfidy. Henchard's fond description of this "'artful little woman'" (MC, XXII) confronts and challenges her manipulative prowess, and climaxes in his reproof, "'O you false woman!"

⁵⁵ Hardy reinterprets (or deliberately misinterprets?) La Rochefoucauld's 289th maxim, 'Simplicity put on is a delicate imposition', at this point. Hardy had already claimed that his re-reading of such as Sterne, Newman and Defoe had brought him to the following: 'Am more and more confirmed in an idea I have long held...long before I thought of any old aphorism bearing on the subject: "*Ars est celare artem*"' (EL, p. 138; March 1875), and, as Richard Taylor, *The Neglected Hardy: Thomas Hardy's Lesser Novels* (London: Macmillan, 1982), observes, here 'Hardy comes close to defining his problem...His prose seems quite the opposite of careless' (p. 47). Hardy has much to say on this matter within the novels themselves, Picotee's announcement to her meretricious sister, "'You calculated how to be uncalculating, and are natural by art!"' (HE, Ch. 20), serving as a motto. In 1869, following the bitterness over the rejection of *The Poor Man and a Lady*, Hardy explains that 'the satire was obviously pushed too far - as sometimes in Swift and Defoe themselves' (EL, p. 81), and it is certainly pertinent that Hardy praises Defoe as the quintessential 'liar' or 'tale-teller' on several occasions. In the same year, Hardy attends to the 'affected simplicity' [cp. 'la simplicité affectée'] of Defoe's (which had long attracted Hardy...to imitation of it' (ib.). This 'imitation' receives double attention in *The Hand of Ethelberta* (where the phonetic correlation of 'de faux' and Defoe becomes obvious), the narrator remarking that 'Defoe...had the most amazing talent on record for telling lies; and Ethelberta [Hardy], in wishing her [his] fiction to appear like a real narrative...did wisely to make Defoe her [his] model' (HE, Ch. 16). Hardy only questioned the ethics behind the duplicitous strategy of 'that master of feigning' (ib.) much later: 'A curious question arose in Hardy's mind...on whether a romancer was morally justified in going to extreme lengths of assurance - after the manner of Defoe - in respect of a tale he knew to be absolutely false' (LY, pp. 194-5; Oct 1919). See Craig Raine, 'Conscious Artistry in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', in *New Perspectives on Thomas Hardy*, ed. Charles P.C. Pettit (New York: St Martin's Press, 1994), pp. 156-71. Cp. 'Speech is too often not, as the Frenchman defined it, the art of concealing Thought; but of quite stifling and suspending Thought' (SR, III.III).

⁵⁶ This derogatory view is also forwarded by the misogynist, Jocelyn St Cleve who believes that women 'lack the power to see things except in the concrete' (TT, 18), and the narrators of *W*, 'external phenomena...may have a great influence upon feminine opinion of a man's worth, so frequently founded on non-essentials' (*W*, V), and *JO*: 'Unlike a woman in ordinary, whose eye is so keen for material things, Sue seemed to see nothing of the room' (*JO*, 6.V).

(MC, XXX) in recognition of her mendacious personality. Elizabeth-Jane and Lucetta differ in their preference for seeing or being seen, for existing as subject or object. As the latter, Lucetta is one of Carlyle's 'Dandiacal Bodies' who come into being as 'a visual object':

Your silver or your gold...he solicits not; simply the glance of your eyes.
Understand his mystic significance, or altogether miss and misinterpret it;
do but look at him, and he is contented. (SR, III.X)

As a 'living Martyr to the eternal worth of Clothes' (ib.), Lucetta manufactures and preserves a defensive, attractive, respectable front. Her 'artfulness' must not be 'seen through' and her masquerade exposed for the sham it is, for Casterbridge, geared toward penetrating the chinks in the armour, is where 'people can look in' to houses when 'the blinds are not drawn' (MC, XXXIV), where 'the eye of your...neighbours' is forever 'concentrated on your back' (MC, XXXVI). Aware of the destructive potential of 'the glare of the public eye', Lucetta goes to extraordinary lengths to preserve the integrity of her chosen role.

The moment Henchard's histrionic 'horse-play' over her secret turns serious this front is jeopardized, and to cajole him into complicity she uses 'the only practicable weapon left' (MC, XXXV) and turns her attire inside out. Her role hitherto has been 'to heighten her natural attraction' (MC, XXXV), but her present purpose for playing is to 'impair the natural presentation', and engineer the figure of the wronged woman. For the costume, she 'selected - as much from want of spirit as design - her poorest, plainest, and longest discarded attire' (ib.); for the venue, she chooses the amphitheatre.⁵⁷ These unhappy people 'seem to imagine that they are always in an amphitheatre, with the assembled world as spectators; whereas, all the while, they are playing to empty benches'

⁵⁷ From a Lacanian perspective, the amphitheatre and Maiden Castle function as significant objective correlatives of Henchard's personality. They are a kind of mirror-stage: 'The formation of the *I* is symbolized in dreams by a fortress, or a stadium...On the mental plane, we find realized the structures of fortified works' (Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits*, trans. A. Sheridan (London: Tavistock Publications, 1977), p. 5). They represent Henchard's defensive ego, and at the end he 'had no wish to make an arena, a second time of a world that had become a mere painted scene to him' (MC, XLIV). His whole life presents a similar circularity to the theatre-in-the-round, and he finds himself back where he started. For a full account of the amphitheatre (and the dice game in *RN*, Stonehenge in *TD*, and Jude's entry into Christminster) see James F. Scott, 'Spectacle and Symbol in Thomas Hardy's Fiction', *Philological Quarterly*, 44 (1965), 527-44. Even more pertinent is the connection of the name Dorchester with the old British name *Dwrinwyn*, a settlement by the *Dwr*, or dark water (the 'Blackwater' (MC, XXXII) / the 'Schwartzwasser' (MC, XIX) of Ten Hatches). Eilert Ekwell, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Place Names* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), notes that the Welsh *dwrn* literally means 'fist', and *gwarae* 'play': thus 'fist-play' would refer to the amphitheatre (p. 148). Hardy's short story, 'A Tryst at an Ancient Earthwork', originally appeared in the *Detroit Post* in 1885, was revised, then published as 'Ancient Earthworks at Casterbridge' in the *English Illustrated Magazine* in Dec 1893. See also Hardy's 'Maumbury Ring' (1908), in *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, pp. 225-232.

(*LN*, I, 989).⁵⁸ To 'play' here may be 'like acting to an empty house' (*MC*, XI), but in this Lucetta-directed scenario Henchard is both leading-man and audience,⁵⁹ and flashbacks and double visions proliferate as Lucetta's masterly performance resurrects the image of Susan. The superimposition of the past's shadowy truth on the present's spurious replica biases Henchard's feelings in her favour, but only the reader, granted a sort of authorial omniscience, can assimilate the range of perspectives, and Hardy's artful manipulation of stagecraft pushes the boundaries of the story further from reality than ordinary stage-illusion ever could.

Comfortable when her role and costume are determined, Lucetta experiences an identity crisis when caught in the throes of sartorial indecision. Making the right choice, she informs Elizabeth-Jane, is imperative:

'You are that person' (pointing to one of the arrangements), 'or you are that totally different person' (pointing to the other), 'for the whole of the coming spring: and one of the two, you don't know which, may turn out to be very objectionable.' (*MC*, XXIV)⁶⁰

This script, with appropriate stage directions, picks up on Carlyle: 'Whatever sensibly exists, whatsoever represents Spirit to Spirit, is properly a Clothing, a suit of Raiment, put on for a season, and to be laid off' (*SR*, I.XI). These expendable coverings are 'sham Metaphors', 'false stuffings, superfluous show-cloaks' for the Spirit, 'deceptively bedizening, or bolstering it out' (*ib.*), and the time spent looking at Lucetta's 'elegant costume' shows how all bodies in the novel 'are cannily constructed, decorously self-contained, and carefully subordinated to their thematic function'.⁶¹ Disposable 'arrangements' define the whole person, and Lucetta's determination 'to be the cherry-coloured person at all hazards' signals the only time she selects a garment which befits her essence. In true Carlylean fashion, it embodies 'all that [she has] thought, dreamed, done, and been' (*SR*, I. XI).

⁵⁸ Sir Arthur Helps, *Essays Written in the Intervals of Business* (London, 1841), pp. 8-9.

⁵⁹ And, in a repetition of the wife-sale, he "sells out" for a second time.

⁶⁰ Lucetta (mis)-appropriates the 'Cause-and-Effect Philosophy of Clothes' that belongs to 'superior Intelligences' (*SR*, I.V). Although Merryn Williams, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, in *A Preface to Hardy* (London and New York: Longman, 1976; 2nd edn. 1993), pp. 101-15, notes that 'at quite an early stage Hardy suggested that Lucetta's personality is, to a great extent, created by clothes' (p. 108; Williams's emphasis), and proceeds to cite this passage, she fails to explore the significance of the suggestion.

⁶¹ Garson, *Hardy's Fables of Integrity*, p. 96.

The significance of this scarlet insignia is objectified in the skimmity-ride, the 'bawdy fantasy'⁶² watched in the town square, the equivalent of the 'rectangular Open Place in spectacular dramas' (MC, XXIV). This 'performance' (MC, XXXVI) offers a grotesque realism which, according to Scribner, 'involves the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal or abstract to a material level, to the sphere of the earth and the body'.⁶³ The Idea is stripped to its crude material trappings. Sycophancy before the specular rather than the authentic is predicated upon the royal parade,⁶⁴ the obsequious 'hero-worship' antagonizing Carlyle's conception of genuine leadership: 'Loyalty and Sovereignty...are not grounded on garnitures and semblances, but on realities and sincerities';⁶⁵ but the Casterbridge ethos is warped, and 'there is in such worship a shade of hypocrisy, a practical deception: for how often does the Body appropriate what was meant for the Cloth only!' (SR, III.VI). Lewes knew, too, that 'heroes require a perspective. They are men who look superhuman only when elevated on the pedestals of their achievements. In ordinary life they look ordinary'.⁶⁶ But 'Society is founded on Hero-worship',⁶⁷ 'folk do worship fine clothes' (MC, XXXVII), and, as one 'observed and imitated', Lucetta's sartorial superiority is 'elevated on a pedestal' and idolized. Nevertheless, her triumphant show is not permitted to usurp centre-stage for long: Jopp's cynical masculine eye easily reduces this living tailor's dummy to a trumped up "'proud piece of silk and waxwork'" (MC, XXXVI), and Nance Mockridge voices the town's unanimous sentiment: "'I do like to see the trimmings pulled off such Christmas candles'" (MC, XXXVII).⁶⁸ She has taken the performance too far.

⁶² Penelope Vigar, *The Novels of Thomas Hardy: Illusion and Reality* (London: Athlone Press, 1974), p. 163. See also Michael Valdez Moses, 'Agon in the Marketplace: The Mayor of Casterbridge as Bourgeois Tragedy', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 87:2 (Spring 1988), 219-51.

⁶³ Bob Scribner, 'Reformation, Carnival and the World turned upside-down', *Social History*, 3 (1978), 303-29 (p. 322).

⁶⁴ The *Yete carillonnee*, literally a bell festival, anticipates the cap-and-bells 'rough jest' (MC, XXXVI) of the deadly ride.

⁶⁵ Carlyle, 'Lecture IV: The Hero as Priest', *On Heroes*, pp. 108-9.

⁶⁶ G.H. Lewes, 'The Principles of Success in Literature', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 (1865), 85-95, 'The Principle of Vision': 185-96, 'Of Vision in Art': 572-89, 697-709 (p. 583); 2 (1865), 257-68, 689-710 (1, p. 193).

⁶⁷ Carlyle, 'Lecture I: The Hero as Divinity', *On Heroes*, p. 12.

⁶⁸ In 1882, skimmity-rides became an offence against the Highways Act; by 1884, they were rare enough to warrant inclusion in a newspaper. Hardy may have read the *Bridport News*, Nov 14, 1884, which includes a similar description: 'About six o'clock in the evening, just as darkness began to reign a strange noise was heard, as of the sound of trays and kettles, and it was soon found that some "skimmerton riding" was in progress, such a thing not having been known for years past in this parish. Three grotesquely-attired figures were seen to be escorted by a procession consisting of persons dressed in various queer and eccentric costumes...The figures alluded to appeared to the villagers to represent three personages...a male and two females, whose past conduct had caused them to be made the subject of this queer exhibition...The Riot Act was not read, the military were not called out, and the crowd dispersed about midnight, when the village resumed its wonted quietude'. The article is displayed in the Dorset County Museum. See also William Hogarth's illustration for *Hudibras*, 'Encounters by Skimmington' (1726), which satirizes, with characteristic extravagance, human folly. Hardy's prose alternative seems to pay tribute to Hogarth's pictorial irony.

A 'pedestal may be a very unreal thing. A pillory is a terrific reality',⁶⁹ and as social discord swells, the Wordsworthian cry goes up:

What say you, then,
To times, when half the city shall break out
Full of one passion, vengeance, rage, or fear?⁷⁰

Hardy recasts Wordsworth's 'Parliament of Monsters' in the skimmity, a concatenation of 'Puppet-shows' which unite to create a 'phantasma / Monstrous in colour, motion, shape, sight, and sound!' This anarchic *fabula* of 'blank confusion' typifies town and inhabitants 'Living amid the same perpetual whirl / Of trivial objects'.⁷¹ Moreover, the pantomimic 'images' of the 'harlequinade' (MC, XL) couple are so true to life (Henchard is a 'stuffed figure with [a] false face') that they stand as their spiritless counterparts, and Lucetta's eyes, riveted 'straight upon the spectacle' (MC, XXXIX), receive the graphic answer to her earlier enquiry, 'How do I appear to people?' (MC, XXIV). Even this incidental detail repeats another theatrical episode, for her double is "dressed as *she* was dressed when she sat in the front seat at the time the play-actors came" (MC, XXXIX). The town's opinion entails more than simple commentary; its collective perceptions are essentially formative: "'She's me - she's me - even to the parasol - my green parasol!'" (ib.).

Lucetta's relationship to this occasion defines her place in the community as 'the transformation of the carnival involves tracing migration, concealment, metamorphosis, fragmentation, internalization and neurotic sublimations'.⁷² The middle-class female is traditionally ranged 'on the outside of the grotesque carnival body', but, in an ironic twist, Lucetta is ostracized by her internal location: her effigy forms half of 'the grotesque carnival body' itself. And just as the typical nineteenth-century heroine introjects the scene, thereby confounding femininity and hysteria,⁷³ so does Lucetta. Her artful sensibilities cannot withstand such brutal reality and the 'spectacle of the uncanny revel'

⁶⁹ Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis* (1905; London: Methuen & Co., 1949), p. 116.

⁷⁰ Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (1805), Book VII, lines 671-3, in *Wordsworth: Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 2nd edn., 1936; rpt. 1974).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, VII, 687-726.

⁷² Peter Sallaby and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (London: Methuen, 1986), p. 180.

⁷³ See Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980* (New York: Pantheon, 1985), and Kirsten Brady, 'Textual Hysteria: Hardy's Narrator on Women', in *The Sense of Sex: Feminist Perspectives on Hardy*, ed. Margaret Higonnet (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 87-106.

pushes her into 'the paroxysms of an epileptic seizure' (MC, XXXIX). The exaggerated public disclosure of her personal terror initiates, in her imagination, a mortal dislocation of her view of the world, and her prettily-contrived existence disintegrates under the assault. Reality is clarified in the inauspicious guise of a waking nightmare.

The mental agony caused by this visual shock pushes Lucetta into the ultimate escape, but its bursting upon Henchard's view provokes the opposite response. Permeated by the paralyzing 'leaden gloom'⁷⁴ of introspectiveness, he considers suicide in Ten Hatches, yet 'the actual presence' of the concluded feat, projected as a physical reality before his eyes, stops him:

While his eyes were bent on the water beneath there slowly became visible a something floating in the circular pool...[I]t passed under his eyes, and then he perceived with a sense of horror that it was himself. Not a man somewhat resembling him, but one in all respects his counterpart, his actual double. (MC, XLD)⁷⁵

This is a powerful subversion of orthodox realism. Conscious of its singularly impressive effect, the episode challenges Woolf's assumption that Hardy approximates 'unconscious writers' like Dickens and Scott who 'seem suddenly and without their own consent to be lifted and swept onwards. The wave sinks and they cannot say what has happened or why'.⁷⁶ Hardy's control is undeniable, and this iconic moment of vision, miraculous, magical and inscrutable, is akin to Carlyle's natural supernaturalism.

⁷⁴ Perhaps this is a forerunner of Hardy's diary entry of Nov 17, 1885 which details his return to the 'original plot' of *W* 'in a fit of depression, as if enveloped in a leaden cloud' (EL, p. 230). Henchard's 'leaden gloom' may also be the formative idea for Giles's similar retreat into that 'gloomy...fogland' (*W*, XIII) which accompanies his separation from Grace.

⁷⁵ Paul Coates's study of the literary double explains how 'the Double tends to appear at dusk, in the form of a floating face or a torso, and to be a momentary, colourless apparition'. In *fin de siècle* literature it has 'the uncanny aspect of the photograph, which is similarly momentary and monochrome. The dusk at which it comes forth is the weary end of the century itself' (*The Double and the Other* (London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 4). Though not a *fin de siècle* novel (its action taking place in the 1840s), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* was published in the late 1880s and has a closer relation to Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, also published in 1886, and Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) than has been appreciated. See J. Gerard Dollar's 'Addiction and the "Other Self" in Three Late Victorian Novels', in *Beyond the Pleasure Dome: Writing and Addiction from the Romantics*, eds. Sue Vice, Matthew Campbell, Tim Armstrong (Sheffield: Sheffield Academy, 1994), pp. 268-74, which compares the three. Indeed, Stevenson's personified dualism is symptomatic of the age's polarized preoccupations and, as with several of Hardy's own "split" characters (Tess splitting into Alec and Angel, Jude into Arabella and Sue), Jekyll (which Stevenson insisted be pronounced Jeckyll because, firstly, that was the Scottish pronunciation, and, secondly, so that Hyde and Jekyll would rhyme with 'hide and seek') dramatizes the conflicts within Stevenson himself, between the private and the public, between reality and dream, conformity and art. Even more applicable is the social ethos of Stevenson's Edinburgh. Like Casterbridge, it had an obsessive concern for respectability; to 'be respectable' was the highest praise. It was also at this time, when Stevenson was materializing subjective transformations, that Freud was studying hypnosis and hysteria as ways of reaching the inner person. The new science of sexual, pathological science was beginning to take off, and it was inevitable that people would begin to make connections. There were even suggestions that Jekyll and Hyde were representations of Stevenson's repressed homosexuality, a theme which shadows Henchard in much the same way. See n. 111.

⁷⁶ Virginia Woolf, 'The Novels of Thomas Hardy' (1928), in *The Common Reader: Second Series* (London: Hogarth Press, 1932), pp. 245-57 (p. 247).

While discussing the supernatural with Archer, Hardy attempted to bring a theological topic into the context of nineteenth-century science by providing a vision which could be understood in those terms. Though Hardy confessed to being 'most anxious to believe in what, roughly speaking, we may call the supernatural', he could 'find no evidence for it',⁷⁷ his reluctant subscription to empirical scepticism meriting a reference in the ironic 'Drinking Song' (*CP*, 896):

Then rose one Hume, who could not see...
 Required were much
 To prove miracles could be.

Carlyle points out the idiocy of such a position: only fools believe that 'the Miraculous, by simple repetition, ceases to be Miraculous', and it is only 'blind custom' which has 'hoodwinked us, from the first' (*SR*, III.VIII), a position shared by Emerson: 'The invariable mark of wisdom is to see the miraculous in the common'.⁷⁸ For Tennyson, too, 'We have but faith: we cannot know; / For knowledge is of things we see'.⁷⁹ Resigned, Hardy follows Hume's notion of the supernatural, and although he confessed that 'half my time...I believe in spectres, mysterious voices, intuitions, dreams, omens' (*LY*, p. 271; Feb 1915), he could not reconcile this with Hume's reasonableness: 'no testimony for any kind of miracle has ever amounted to a probability, much less to a proof'.⁸⁰ Not even that of a fallen mayor. 'Primitive man is prone to see miracle in everything that appears odd or strange' (*LN*, I, 1464),⁸¹ and Henchard, 'like all his kind, was superstitious' (*MC*, XIX),⁸² he thus interprets his effigy as the fulfilment of the proleptic vision of the

⁷⁷ William Archer, *Real Conversations* (London: Heinemann, 1904), p. 37.

⁷⁸ Ralph Waldo Emerson, 'Nature' (1832), in *Works of Emerson*, 12 vols (New York: AMS Press, 1968), I, 7-77 (p. 74). Hardy read this essay in 1885.

⁷⁹ Alfred Tennyson, Prologue to *In Memoriam* (1849), in *The Complete Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1898), lines 21-2. Cp. Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. George Eliot (1854; London and New York: Harper & Row, 1957): 'A being's understanding is its sphere of vision. As far as thou seest, so far extends thy nature; and conversely' (Ch. I: 1, p. 8).

⁸⁰ David Hume, *Hume's Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1748, 1751), ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), 'Human Understanding', X, II, p. 127. Cp. Hardy's note from James Cotter Morison's *The Service of Man. An Essay toward the Religion of the Future* (London, 1887): 'Hume's principle, as (fairly) stated by Paley - "That it is contrary to experience that miracles should be true, but not contrary to experience that testimony should be false"' (*LN*, I, 1464).

⁸¹ Unidentified.

⁸² In this respect, Henchard has a brother in Adam Bede. The death of Thias is surrounded by portentous omens and supernatural incidents, and Adam falls back on an inherited interpretation of events: 'Adam was not man to be gratuitously superstitious; but he had the blood of the peasant in him as well as of the artisan, and a peasant can no more help believing in traditional superstition than a horse can help trembling when he sees a camel...[H]e had that mental combination which is at once humble in the region of mystery and keen in the region of knowledge' (*Adam Bede*, I. 4).

gallows, the design of which 'remained incomplete' without 'the corpse of a man' (ib.). Wordsworth's question, 'shall some floating thing / Upon the river point me out my course?'⁸³ is answered: Henchard's meeting with his inanimate image completes the structure and persuades him into a belief that his torture is over: 'the sense of the supernatural was strong in this unhappy man and he turned away as one might have done in the presence of an appalling miracle' (MC, XLI).⁸⁴

Elizabeth-Jane may echo Arnold's '*miracles do not happen*',⁸⁵ but what takes place is miraculous, whatever its source, as Henchard perceives: "'That performance of theirs killed her, but kept me alive!'" (MC, XLI). Guerard may dismiss this incident as an example of 'macabre absurdity, not macabre neurosis', but it is, as Sumner persuasively argues, the 'most striking experience of a schizoid kind'.⁸⁶ An innocuous mannequin and a terrible replication of the self, the *doppelgänger* signifies Henchard's self-alienation, a dissociation of mind and body. Hoffmann's *The Double* (1846)⁸⁷ was instrumental in giving this idea significance by transferring it from the supernatural to man's inner world, and Hardy's conception of this phenomenon opens itself to psychological interpretation:

⁸³ Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, Book I, lines 29-30. Water serves a prophetic function. See Stirling Haig, "By the Rivers of Babylon": Water and Exile in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 11 (1984), 55-64.

⁸⁴ See Leslie Stephen, 'Newman's Theory of Belief', in *An Agnostic's Apology, and Other Essays* (London: Smith & Elder, 1893; rpt. Bristol: Thoemmes, 1991), pp. 168-241: Newman 'admits Hume's argument against miracles to be valid from a purely scientific aspect of things' (p. 180). Moreover, he contends that man's present nature is evil, not good...His improvement, then, if he improves, must be supernatural and miraculous, not the spontaneous working of his natural tendencies' (pp. 172-3). But if the 'miraculous' were responsible for Henchard's change of heart at this stage, it problematizes the notion of a pathetic as opposed to a tragic character. Either way, it puts into practice the Feuerbachian stance: 'But what is miracle? A supernaturalistic wish realised - nothing more' (Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, Ch. XIII: 'The Mystery of Faith - The Mystery of Miracle', pp. 128-9).

⁸⁵ See *Literature and Dogma*, Ch. V: 'The Proof from Miracles', in *Dissent and Dogma*, ed. R.H. Super (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968), pp. 238-57.

⁸⁶ Albert J. Guerard, *A Study of Thomas Hardy* (New York: New Directions, 1964), p. 87; Rosemary Sumner, *Thomas Hardy: Psychological Novelist* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1981), p. 72. See the rest of Sumner's chapter, 'Henchard', pp. 57-81, for a full account of the hero's psychology, and Robert Rogers, *A Psychoanalytic Study of the Double in Literature* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970). Self-alienation, or splitting, was revised and rewritten by the Victorians to the point of obsession. The violent passions explored in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) are a possible cause of the hero's schizotypic tendencies: scientist and creation are two sides of one man. The Brontës expanded upon this further. Rochester's passion for the heroine of *Jane Eyre* (1847) "fuses you and me in one" (Ch. 27); in *Wuthering Heights* (1847), Cathy's "'I am Heathcliff...our separation...is impracticable'" (Ch. 9) anticipates the idea's fuller expression in Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886).

⁸⁷ A year earlier, Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Purloined Letter' (1845) had presented the possibility of 'a double Dupin'; the story is claustrophobically self-reflective. Hoffmann influenced Dostoevsky in this respect, as in the case of Mr Golyadkin and 'another Mr Golyadkin', who is 'a completely different one, and yet at the same time very like the other', who has the same name, looks exactly the same, but behaves completely differently (Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from the Underground: The Double*, trans. Jessie Coulson (1846; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p. 177). R.D. Laing, commenting on Dostoevsky's *The Double*, explains how Dostoevsky 'shows how this "delusion" (that the character has seen himself) is intimately connected with Golyadkin's own secret intention not to be himself' (*The Self and Others* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1961), p. 9). Henchard demonstrates the same desire at this point. The topic was also unrelentingly explored in poetry and painting. Dante Gabriel Rossetti's poem, 'The Portrait', in *The Poetical Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, ed. William Rossetti (London: Ellis and Elvey, 1891), and its reflection, or 'double', in the painting, 'How They Met Themselves' (1860), perhaps giving Hardy another source of reference. It is clear that the line, 'And your own footsteps meeting you' (line 26) identifies the idea of the *doppelgänger*. Commenting on Rossetti's use of this concept, Rodolphe Louis Megroz, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Painter Poet of Heaven in Earth* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), explains that 'there is some deep affinity between the belief in "doubles" and the state of divided personality which in the extreme pathological condition results from the conflict of diverging emotions' (see pp. 279-81). Yet the symbolic confrontation of self in both Rossetti's poem and Hardy's novel is only one instance of the numerous symbols of division and separateness. Rossetti uses what Megroz terms the 'ancient furniture of romantic terror', portrait and mirror, to formalize his expression of the theme of imperfect reflections just as Hardy uses water, eyes and mirrors.

the image manifests Henchard's *alter ego* and can be read as two sides of one character. Though Hardy lacked the necessary psychological knowledge to expertly analyse the dual role that traps Henchard, his artistic exploration of the condition is psychologically convincing.

This vision, 'reaching beyond realism',⁸⁸ implies that a distorted reconstruction, an artful exaggeration, of reality is a positive thing for Henchard at this point; it clears his eyes. In revising his self-destructive impulse, the suicidal Teufelsdröckh sees, like Henchard, that, as 'a feeble unit in the middle of a threatening Infinitude, I seemed to have nothing given me but eyes, whereby to discern my own wretchedness' (SR, II. VII). The 'strange isolation I then lived in' (ib.) is shattered when each man undergoes his personal water- or 'Fire-baptism' (SR, II. VIII) and learns that '*The end of Man is an Action, and not a Thought*' (SR, II. VI).⁸⁹ But Henchard is dogged by a 'haunting shade' (MC, XLI) which teaches the meaning of the cast-off Carlylean 'shell' and Wordsworth's account of the 'heap of garments' by the river. 'Unclaimed', they tell 'a plain tale' and signify the drowned 'dead man', his corpse presenting 'a spectre shape of terror' to any objective observer.⁹⁰

In Hardy's anti-Romantic version, the discarded carapace is Henchard's dead, fallacious self, and it is the 'divining' Elizabeth-Jane who, looking three times, recapitulates Hardy's portrayal of the protagonist. Henchard is 'nothing' in the first viewing, 'a bundle of old clothes' in the second, a costume of self-hood, a Carlylean taylor's dummy; finally, he is a wooden construction, an 'effigy' (MC, XLV). But even 'Old Clothes', 'Empty' or 'Cast Clothes', are 'venerable' as the 'Ghosts of life', and 'so do I worship the hollow cloth Garment with equal fervour, as when it contained the Man' (SR, III. VI). Despite the symbolic evidence of his fallen status - from 'the remains of an old blue cloth suit of his gentlemanly times' (MC, XXXII) to the 'frayed and threadbare ...clothes which he had used to wear in the primal days' (MC, XXXVII) - Henchard jealously clings to the 'many parts' he has played during his hour upon the boards. His

⁸⁸ Peter Easingwood, 'The Mayor of Casterbridge and the Irony of Literary Production', p. 68.

⁸⁹ See Kevin Z. Moore, 'Death against Life: Hardy's Mortified and Mortifying "Man of Character" in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', *Ball State University Forum*, 24:3 (1983), 13-25.

⁹⁰ Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, Book I, lines 437, 443, 448, 450.

Lear-like rebirth at the ministering hands of this rejected/reaccepted Cordelia is dramatized by his desire 'to put on clean linen' (*MC*, XLI);⁹¹ and so necessary is her sympathy to his continued existence that 'on her account pride itself wore the garments of humility' (*MC*, XLII).

During Henchard's 'gloom', Elizabeth-Jane stands as a guiding 'pin-point of light' (*MC*, XL),⁹² and it is Carlyle's 'feeble light' sparked by a 'precise recognition of the darkness'⁹³ which illuminates her perceptual sagacity. Embodying dispassionate clear-sight, she is the only 'good and pure', that is, authentic (as Henchard believes), person presented. For Grossman, she is 'Hardy's most objective observer; she propels the narrative with her keen sight',⁹⁴ and as 'a centre of consciousness'⁹⁵ she dominates the narrative perspective in much the same way as Oak. The instant she enters Casterbridge she is marked as a genuine, trustworthy witness and we are encouraged to accept her as such. A Carlylean Prophet-cum-Priest, Elizabeth-Jane possesses that ability to recognize reality in the midst of falsehood, her distinguishing trait, along with Teufelsdröckh, being a penetrating intelligence or insight which reveals 'the awful realities of things'.⁹⁶ She cannot evade any reality that 'glared in upon [her]',⁹⁷ and the hero, 'fly as he will... cannot get out of the awful presence of this Reality',⁹⁸ indeed, her function is to 'get acquainted with realities, and keep acquainted with them, at whatever cost'.⁹⁹ As with the Hero as Priest, Hardy's Seer must 'bring the whole world back to reality, for it has dwelt too long with semblance!'¹⁰⁰

Approximating the author's position, Hardy's Heroine as Seer is 'a spectator of all that went on without herself being particularly seen' (*MC*, XVI), and is counted 'among

⁹¹ Henchard has much in common with Lear. At the conclusion of Lear's madness, and as a result of Cordelia's care, those around 'put fresh garments on him' (*King Lear*, IV. 7. 29). Cordelia also tells Kent to 'put off his present attire: These weeds are memories of those worse hours (IV. 7. 8). *King Lear* is replete with references to the significance of clothes. Lear loses his symbolic office, his crown, refers to garments as spurious 'lendings' in the famous 'Off, off, you lendings!' in his attempt to discover his essential humanity as 'unaccommodated man' (III. 4. 103). And there is a terrible truth in his bitter recognition that 'Robes and furr'd gowns hide all' (IV. 6. 155).

⁹² He will return to that 'leadén gloom' in which 'the whole land ahead of him was as darkness itself' (*MC*, XLI) when Newson returns; it also anticipates the essential mood of *W*.

⁹³ Thomas Carlyle, 'Characteristics' (1831), in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, 5 vols (1899; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1969), III, 1-44 (p. 13).

⁹⁴ Julie Grossman, 'Thomas Hardy and the Role of Observer', *English Literary History*, 56 (Fall, 1989), 619-38 (p. 619).

⁹⁵ John Goode, *Thomas Hardy: The Offensive Truth* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), p. 84; see also Jean Brookes, *Thomas Hardy: The Poetic Structure* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, London: Elek, 1971), p. 212.

⁹⁶ Carlyle, 'Lecture IV: The Hero as Priest', *On Heroes*, pp. 99-131 (p. 105).

⁹⁷ Carlyle, 'Lecture II: The Hero as Prophet', *On Heroes*, pp. 37-66 (p. 47).

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁹⁹ Carlyle, 'Lecture IV: The Hero as Priest', *On Heroes*, p. 110.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

the rest of the onlookers' (MC, XVI). As the guardian of the correct viewpoint, much of the action is filtered through her 'thoughtful', 'reflective' and 'observant' eyes, and 'being out of the game, and out of the group, [she] could observe all from afar, like the evangelist who had to write it down. (MC, XXVI). This distanced and distancing objectivity is the source of her greatest attribute, her appreciation of irony. Always at one remove, she watches the watched develop an 'absolute obliviousness to her existence', and thus ignored she views proceedings 'from the crystalline sphere of a straightforward mind' (MC, XXV).

Teufelsdröckh's comparable social inexperience permits him to 'look in men's faces with a strange impartiality, a strange scientific freedom', and just as Elizabeth-Jane's perspicacity and observational integrity grows at the expense of her subjective involvement, so it is with the Professor: 'Many a deep glance, and often with unspeakable precision, has he cast into mysterious Nature...[H]e severs asunder the confusion; steers down...into the true centre of the matter' (SR, I.IV). Theirs is not the 'public eye' which maintains the fallacious Carlylean 'Clothes-screen', but the genuine, individual 'philosophic eye' (SR, I.XI); they alone 'look through the Show of things into Things themselves' (SR, II.X), decipher the hidden semantics of this sartorial language and comprehend the full significance of things' literal and metaphorical relation to the Real. Unlike the rest, Elizabeth-Jane is not 'a Pair of Spectacles behind which there is no Eye' (SR, I.X), but one who recognizes that, 'rightly viewed, no meanest object is insignificant; all objects are as windows, through which the philosophic eye looks into Infinitude itself' (SR, I.XI), and she alone in Casterbridge applies the injunction that 'the beginning of Wisdom is to look fixedly on Clothes, or even with armed eyesight, till they become *transparent*' (SR, I.X).¹⁰¹

Given that 'on a sudden...the Clothes fly-off the whole dramatic corps', dependence on such ephemerality is foolhardy, and we should, like Teufelsdröckh, look 'at all Matter and Material things as Spirits' (SR, I.IX). We must not be deluded by the

¹⁰¹ Perhaps this is related to the discussion of Coleridge's 'armed vision', in *Biographia Literaria* (1817), ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, vol VII *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn, 16 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), VII (i), Ch. VII, p. 118 n.3.

stability or longevity of even 'a whole immensity' of furniture; a superfluity of 'Brussels carpets, and pier-glasses...cannot hide from me that such Drawing-room is simply a section of Infinite Space' (*SR*, I.IV).¹⁰² Once transcendentalism consigns the physically tangible to oblivion, 'we sit in a boundless Phantasmagoria and dream- grotto...sounds and many-coloured visions flit[ting] round our sense' (*SR*, I.VIII).

In his essay on Shelley, Bagehot explains that Hume

professed to hold that there was no substantial thing, either matter or mind; but only 'sensations and impressions' flying around the universe, inhering in nothing and going nowhere. There, he said, were the only subjects of your consciousness; all you felt was your feeling, and all you thought was your thought; the rest was only hypothesis.¹⁰³

Unlike the other Romantics, Shelley refused to affiliate Night with Death; rather, the 'desert of dim sleep' is 'That world which, like an unknown wilderness, / Bounds this with its recesses wide and deep' and reveals to the sleeper 'the secrets of the air'.¹⁰⁴ For Novalis, too, sleep is the Key, 'A silent messenger / Of infinite mysteries'.¹⁰⁵ Hardy engages the same enigma, and, prefatory to unconscious voyaging, Elizabeth-Jane wonders

why things around her had taken the shape they wore in preference to every other possible shape. Why they stared at her so helplessly, as if waiting for the touch of some wand that should release them from terrestrial constraint; what chaos called consciousness...tended to, and began in. (*MC*, XVIII)

Elizabeth-Jane begins a subjective withdrawal until she watches things, locked in their helpless objectivity, at one remove, yet despite its self-consciousness the mind still turns toward externals:

¹⁰² According to the Professor, the 'deepest of all illusory Appearances, for hiding Wonder, are your two grand fundamental world-enveloping Appearances, SPACE and TIME'. Each is 'spun and woven...to clothe our celestial ME...and yet to blind it' (*SR*, III. VIII). And it is through these dimensions that 'all minor Illusions, in this Phantasm Existence, weave and paint themselves' (ib.). They cannot be stripped off, only rent momentarily and seen through. In March 1888, Hardy recorded the following: 'Souls are gliding about here in a sort of dream - screened somewhat by their bodies, but imaginable behind them. Dissolution is gnawing at them all...In the great circle of the library Time is looking into Space...There is no consciousness here of where anything comes from or goes to - only that it is present' (*EL*, pp. 270-1; March 1888).

¹⁰³ Walter Bagehot, *Literary Studies*, 3 vols (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1902), I, 269-70. Hardy first read this study in 1869; see *EL*, p. 43.

¹⁰⁴ Shelley, 'Marianne's Dream' (1817), in *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1905; rpt. 1961), line 3.

¹⁰⁵ Novalis, *Hymns to the Night*, trans. Mabel Cottrell (London: Phoenix Press, 1948), p. 29.

The act of coming to self-awareness does not lend to a recognition of the intrinsic quality of the mind. It is a revelation about the outside world, a recognition of the mute detachment of external objects,¹⁰⁶

a patent reminder that 'all terrestrial conditions were intermittent' (*MC*, I), that 'the Heavens and the earth shall fade away' (*SR*, I.XI), for 'all Forms are but Clothes, and temporary' (*SR*, Summary, III.IX).

Such statements pronounce the phantasmal essence as the only real, permanent condition, and troubled by the objects' endless waiting for liberation from Carlyle's 'enchanter's wand',¹⁰⁷ Elizabeth-Jane falls asleep and wakes in that phantasmal realm to contemplate the 'WHERE, with its brother WHEN...the master-colours of our Dream-grotto; say rather, the Canvas...whereon all our Dreams and Life-visions are painted' (*SR*, I. VIII). And so 'her eyes fell together; she was awake, yet she was asleep' (*MC*, XVIII). Semi-consciousness is crucial to the revelation of ultimate truths in *Sartor Resartus*, and the equivalent moment in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* revises that 'Strange Dream' in which, Teufelsdröckh explains, 'we clutch at shadows as if they were substances; and sleep deepest while fancying ourselves most awake!' (*SR*, I. VIII).¹⁰⁸ The line separating the dreamed from the actual is obscured, inner reality dominates outer, and she dissolves her individuality back into the original, the Where.¹⁰⁹ From the perspective of the conscious mind, Elizabeth-Jane no longer exists: she has surrendered the external world for one of pure introspection.

Hardy and Carlyle pinpoint the deceptive confusion wrought by the transitional phase of altered consciousness. The state approximates a pseudo day-dream, and for

¹⁰⁶ J. Hillis Miller, *Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ Scenes in *The Dynasts* pass 'as by a conjuror's wand' (*D*, 2.V.viii).

¹⁰⁸ There are so many probable predicates that it is not unreasonable to suggest a Rossetian echo here. D.G. Rossetti was, like Hardy, profoundly interested in the discrepancy between illusion and reality and 'The Portrait', in *The Poetical Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (London: Ellis and Elvey, 1891), ed. William Rossetti, is a complex of images involved with the distinction between reality and the various reflections of that reality. In particular, the 'night' of stanza nine is a dreamland which confounds the definition of any one reality, and stands as an expression of the strange perception we having when on the border of sleeping and waking where the 'facts' present themselves with such intensity that they seem, for the duration of that transitional state, as real as those which occupy our fully conscious perceptions.

¹⁰⁹ Perhaps an allusion to Keats's 'Endymion' (1818), in *The Poems of John Keats*, ed. Miriam Allott (London and New York: Longman, 1970):

...the seeming confines of the space
Made for the soul to wander in and trace
Its own existence. (Book IV, lines 514-16)

See also the Chorus in *The Dynasts*: 'Yea, from the Void we fetch...' (*D*, I.VI.viii).

Hardy, 'that it is because we are in a somnambulistic hallucination that we think the real to be what we see as real' (*EL*, p. 243; Feb 1887). To Carlyle,

this Dreaming, this Somnambulism is what we on Earth call Life...So that this so solid-seeming World, after all, were but an air-image, our ME the only reality: and Nature...but the reflex of our own inward Force, the 'phantasy of our Dream'. (*SR*, I. VIII)

Dreams are psychic hieroglyphs to the secrets of the mind and its creative link with reality. External phenomena are subjective impressions precipitated by the individual 'I' in its isolation, 'each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world'.¹¹⁰

Elizabeth-Jane's and Teufelsdröckh's heightened perspicacity confines them in a material as well as mental chamber which is raised, literally and figuratively, above all others. Location and function become synonymous. Thus her window in Henchard's house 'commanded a view' of everything below and 'afforded her opportunity for accurate observation' of Farfrae who is appointed as 'a second pair of eyes' (*MC*, XIV) to Henchard's. She is frequently shown 'looking down...from on high' (*ib.*), and when she moves in with Lucetta inhabits rooms with a 'raking view...looking down upon the market' (*MC*, XXII). Similarly, Teufelsdröckh's 'speculum or watch-tower'¹¹¹ is situated in 'the highest attic floor of the highest house' so that, 'sitting at ease, he might see the whole life-circulation of [his] considerable City', the thorough-fares of which 'were for the most part visible' (*SR*, I. III).

In addition, the way rooms are clothed exhibits their function and surfaces, or exposes, their owners' inner personalities. Just as the superficially-minded Lucetta decks herself with frivolous trivia, so her home is 'prettily furnished' (*MC*, XXII). Henchard, as one for whom 'material things increasingly possess the mind' (*ib.*), surrounds himself with items denoting solidity, security and permanence, material quantities of desirable

¹¹⁰ Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (1873; London: Macmillan, 1920), p. 235.

¹¹¹ As a literary term, 'mirror' is based on the Medieval Latin use of the word *speculum* (as in Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Naturale, Historiale, Doctrinale* (c. 1250), or John Gower's *Speculum Meditantis* (c. 1376-8) which was translated into French as *Mirour de L'Homme*) to mean a true reflection or description of a particular subject. The fifteenth century produced such titles as Nicholas Love's *Mirroure of the Blessed Lyf of Iesu Christ*, William Caxton's translation, from the French, of the *Mirroure of the World*, and a translation of Nigel Wireker's *Speculum Stultorum*. The mirror image was especially prevalent in descriptions of comedies, the forerunners of literary realism. Cicero defined comedy as 'a copy of life, a mirror of custom'; Ben Jonson, following Cicero, uses *Cordatus* as a mouthpiece: comedy is an '*imitatio vitae, speculum consuetudinis, imago veritatis*' (*Every Man out of His Humour*, III, VI, 201ff).

qualities. Although the main room is 'furnished to profusion with heavy mahogany furniture...with legs and feet shaped like those of an elephant' (MC, X), our consciousness of it as a portion of nothingness is a disturbing undercurrent. Trusting only the large and durable, Henchard cannot therefore comprehend Elizabeth-Jane's physically feeble tokens of mental clothing - the 'abundance of books' - and perceives them as unfathomable anomalies: 'Their number and quality made the meagre furniture that supported them seem absurdly disproportionate' (MC, XLII). Hardy follows Carlyle's distribution of real weight and value, however abstract the concept, for an eye scanning the Professor's abode would find 'a strange apartment; full of books and tattered papers ...Books lay on tables, and below tables' (SR, I. III).

Elizabeth-Jane's intellectualism compensates for her unorthodox beauty and her suppressed sexuality,¹¹² yet when she betrays the former for the latter, she immediately undermines her conventional attitude by mocking its absurdity and hankering after an anti-feminine culture: "'Here am I setting up as the town beauty!...Better sell all this finery and buy myself...books'" (MC, XV). She sees, understands, the fallacy, and reflects and centres the work's proper perspective in her 'quiet eye'. Indeed, it is the sheer inconspicuousness of the 'grey, thoughtful eyes' (MC, XIV) of this 'silent observing woman' (MC, XVII)¹¹³ which permit her to see what is really going on.¹¹⁴ Here, Hardy may be reworking Newton's optical '*Crystalline Humour*', Bain's '*vitreous* or glassy

¹¹² Hillis Miller, *Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire*, speaks of the novel as 'a nightmare of frustrated desire' (p. 148), but Ian Gregor, *The Great Web: The Form of Hardy's Major Fiction* (London: Faber & Faber, 1974), observes that MC is 'one of the very few major novels...where sexual relationships are not...the dominant element' (p. 119). See also Elaine Showalter, 'The Unmanning of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', in *Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Dale Kramer (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan; New York: Barnes & Nobles, 1979), pp. 99-115. T.R. Wright, *Hardy and the Erotic* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1989), sees the interaction of Henchard and Farfrae as 'never an avowedly homosexual relationship, but Henchard's manliness is clearly more complex than he cares to admit' (p. 78). Robert Langbaum, 'The Minimization of Sexuality in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, VIII:1 (Feb 1992), 20-32, perceives 'a minimum of sexual feeling in the novel as a whole' (p. 20), and discerns a desire for power in the 'homoeoticism' (p. 22) that exists between Henchard and Farfrae. See also Tod E. Jones, 'Michael Henchard: Hardy's Male Homosexual', *Victorian Newsletter*, 86 (Fall 1994), 9-13. Jones argues that to understand the novel fully, the reader must recognize Henchard's repressed homosexuality.

¹¹³ Protagonists are shown to be at the mercy of language, whether written or spoken for it makes and breaks identities. Perhaps Elizabeth-Jane's characteristic 'silence' accounts for her survival and personal autonomy. On identity and character, and its relation to language, see Jeanette King, 'The Mayor of Casterbridge: Talking about Character', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, VIII:3 (Oct 1992), 42-6.

¹¹⁴ Elizabeth-Jane has much in common, perceptually, with Austen's Fanny Price, though she possesses none of that heroine's moral superiority. Fanny has a 'quiet passive manner', watches, is excluded, has 'a fondness for reading', and reveals her tenacity during the theatricals. The closest precedent, however, is more likely to be Anne Eliot who indulges in 'a great deal of quiet observation' and 'feels it was highly incumbent to clothe her imagination, her memory and all her ideas' with the essence of Uppercross (*Persuasion*, Chs. 5 and 6). For an interesting discussion on superiority and snobbishness, see Tom Winnifirth, 'Thomas Hardy and Jane Austen', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XII:3 (Oct 1996), 57-64.

humour...behind the crystalline lens',¹¹⁵ as well as Burke's discourse on 'The Eye' in *The Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757) which contends that

the beauty of the eye consists, first, in its *clearness*... We are pleased with the eye in this view, on the principle upon which we like diamonds, clear water, glass, and such like transparent substances... [T]he eye affects, as it is expressive of some qualities of the mind.¹¹⁶

Not in possession of a 'coloured eye',¹¹⁷ Elizabeth-Jane's 'aerial grey eyes' (MC, X) are tempered and controlled, devoid of the 'red' tint of Henchard's and the histrionic anxiety which kindle Lucetta's, and are 'expressive of some qualities' of her 'crystalline...mind' (MC, XXV).¹¹⁸ Their 'reasonableness' recognizes the ambiguous nature of the world and accepts 'the persistence of the unforeseen' (MC, XLV), a double vision which synthesizes the optical alternatives explored in the novel into one 'accurate observation' (MC, XIV).¹¹⁹

And this 'reasonableness' extends to the *menage a trois* she forms with Lucetta and Farfrae. In the ensuing visual contest, 'the reflective' Elizabeth-Jane may be 'more observant than her brilliant' (MC, XXIV) opponent, but she is bereft of the alluring sparkle necessary to entrance Farfrae. Visually seduced by Lucetta, he passes 'from perception of Elizabeth into a brighter sphere of existence than she appertained to' (ib.), and given their 'absolute obliviousness to her existence' she becomes 'invisible' (MC, XXV). Hardy once again addresses the perceptual/ontological question, and Kiely comes close to identifying its empirical source:

¹¹⁵ Isaac Newton, *Opticks, or A Treatise of the Reflections, Refractions, Inflections and Colours of Light* (1704; 4th edn. 1730; New York: Dover, 1952), Bk I, Part I, Axiom VII, pp. 14-17 (p. 16); Alexander Bain, 'Sense of Sight', in *The Senses and the Intellect* (1855; London: Longmans, Green & Co., 4th edn., 1894), pp. 222-59 (p. 234).

¹¹⁶ Burke, Edmund, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), in *The Works of Edmund Burke*, 8 vols (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854), I, 49-181 (I, 137).

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ The colour of her eyes is important; it is not an inconsequential detail, but a piece of knowledge which Hardy deliberately shares with the reader. He is to call upon our involvement, through memory, in the perceptual irony perpetrated and perpetuated by Susan. At the start, Elizabeth-Jane as a baby has 'black eyes' (MC, I), but by chapter X, following her reappearance, Hardy holds back from a physical description and instead focuses on the 'aerial grey eyes', preceding them with Henchard's own 'dark pupils'. Eye colour provides a clue to the past. The signs are there and our memory anticipates Hardy's later exercise of his remembered knowledge.

¹¹⁹ Elizabeth-Jane's perceptual/moral superiority renders her immune from the amatory susceptibilities of women in general. "You can't trust their senses", a hand informs Henchard, because infatuation, imposing its own perceptual laws, "mak[es] crooked things seem straight to their eyes!" (MC, XXVII). Such misogynistic judgments regarding the limited compass of feminine perspicacity is addressed by Dickens. The symbolically "good" Rose Maylie, professing her inability to "see" anything guilty about Oliver, encourages Mr Loobner's reply, "Of course not! Bless the bright eyes of your sex! They never see, whether for good or bad, more than one side of any question; and that is, always, the one which first presents itself to them"; his knowledge in this department is the 'result of experience' (*Oliver Twist*, Ch. 31). The irony is that Rose's view is correct.

Though nearly all the main characters are preoccupied with themselves, all... do try at some point to see, and, by seeing, to know other beings. We learn very early in the novel that if men do not pay attention to one another, each can lapse into a kind of invisibility since there seem to be no heavenly eyes to give substance to his thoughts and actions.¹²⁰

This argument is even more true when 'men do not pay attention' to women, and recalls the Berkeleyan stance that, were there no God, things would have a disjointed, awkward existence, jumping into being only when perceived. Were there an overseeing Eye, Elizabeth-Jane would be guaranteed a continuous existence. She is not.

In the referential frame constructed by Lucetta and Farfrae, Elizabeth-Jane is an object with no independent autonomy eclipsed by a process akin to occultation, and however bright her projecting soul may be, Lucetta's dazzling display exerts as blinding an influence over Donald as Troy's does over Bathsheba. Like them, Lucetta's aesthetic susceptibilities involve a need for 'seeing the attractive' appreciator of her attractiveness, a 'fact...printed large all over Lucetta's...eyes to anyone who could read her as Elizabeth-Jane was beginning to do' (*MC*, XXIV). Never for an instant is Elizabeth-Jane 'beguiled' by Lucetta and in fact directs much of her energy into destroying the contrived 'mask' (*MC*, XXX). Moreover, it is from such readings that Elizabeth-Jane, a 'discerning silent witch' credited with possessing 'a seer's spirit' (*ib.*), is associated with the insight of the ancient Wise Ones, and by equating depth of vision and divination, Hardy insinuates that her gifted ability makes her one who 'sees the essential point, & leaves all the rest aside as surplusage' (*LN*, I, 1405).¹²¹ It is a point of view which glances at Carlyle's Divine, heroic 'Seer'¹²² and Teufelsdröckh's reverence of such intuition: 'In our Wild Seer...there is an untutored energy, a silent, as it were unconscious, strength' (*SR*, I.IV). And as a 'dumb...great-eyed creature' (*MC*, XX), Elizabeth-Jane not only parallels Old Lieschen, 'the ancient woman; so silent some thought her dumb', who communicates with the

¹²⁰ Robert Kiely, 'Vision and Viewpoint in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 23 (Sept. 1968), 189-200 (p. 196).

¹²¹ Thomas Carlyle, 'The Hero as Poet', *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, in *Works*, XII, 110. Grossman's claim that Elizabeth-Jane 'is probably the closest to an observer who "sees" things as they really are', is credible; much less so is her contention that 'she is also probably the most perplexing of all Hardy's characters', ignoring, as it does, the sheer inexplicability of Sue ('Thomas Hardy and the Role of Observer', p. 633).

¹²² Carlyle, 'Lecture I: The Hero as Divinity', *On Heroes*, pp. 3-36 (p. 20).

Professor 'by some secret divination' (*SR*, I.III), but the heroic voice of the great 'dumb Prophet struggling to speak'.¹²³

Elizabeth-Jane is an inactive watcher who is actively watched, and by recording characters' shifting perceptual attitudes toward her, Hardy explodes the tenacious faith that man places in illusions. Without exception, 'the eye sees that which it brings with it the means of seeing', and Henchard's predisposed eye wants, and thus sees, evidence of consanguinity in Elizabeth-Jane's countenance. The readjustment of his emotional and visual attitude affects him personally in that he cannot look at her in the same way, and contributes to the ubiquitous confusion over identities, for "'we hardly know how to look at things in these times'" (*MC*, XIII), an observation which articulates the principal concern of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Hardy's canon, and the controversy surrounding realism 'in these times' generally.

Hardy's characters are instructed 'how to look at things' in a number of ways, but most prolific are instances of the personified text, the legible face. Henchard is taught 'the means of seeing' from Susan's letter, a token which, emulating Teufelsdröckh and anticipating Nabokov, he 'regarded...as if it were a window-pane through which he saw for miles' (*MC*, XIX), for all objects are 'transparent things, through which the past shines'.¹²⁴ With this evidence in his mind's eye, he illuminates a foregone conclusion:

Gradually bringing the light from behind a screening curtain he held it in such a manner that it fell slantwise on her face without shining on her eyes. He steadfastly regarded her features. (*MC*, XIX)

The text hints at deliberate misapplication of the written data and Henchard's 'slantwise' orientation of the lamp precludes an unbiased view; this is no straightforward gesture. Prejudiced, Henchard's 'reading' involves not only 'a rethinking of chronology'¹²⁵ but of genealogy too:

In sleep there come to the surface buried genealogical facts...which the mobility of daytime animation screens and overwhelms. In the present statuesque repose of the young girl's countenance Richard Newson's

¹²³ Carlyle, 'Lecture VI: The Hero as King', *On Heroes*, pp. 169-209 (p. 204).

¹²⁴ Vladimir Nabokov, *Transparent Things* (New York: McGraw, 1972), p. 1. See Norman Page's discussion, 'Hardy and "the world of little things"', *Thomas Hardy Annual: No. 5*, ed. Norman Page (London: Macmillan, 1987), 119-36, which focuses on Hardy's use of the daily world of solid objects, especially, in Nabokov's words, those 'transparent things, through which the past shines'.

¹²⁵ Prentiss, 'Compilation and Design in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', p. 63.

In this unconscious state, 'the young girl' is a triple-faceted reflection of herself, her biological father and her dead sister. Absolute nomination seems irresolvable, yet 'who is she?' is invariably answered in masculine terms, her identity changing with each successive surname: Newson, Henchard, Newson, Farfrae.

But Hardy is dealing with questions far deeper than the superficial significance of names which 'are but one kind of custom-woven, wonder-hiding Garment' (SR, III. VIII):

The Name is the earliest Garment you wrap round the earth-visiting ME...
Names are the most important of all Clothings...Not only all common
Speech, but Science, Poetry itself is no other...than a right Naming.
(SR, II.I)¹²⁶

About this time, Hardy notes that 'Names are either concrete or abstract' (LN, I, 1373); in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, as in *Sartor Resartus*, they are both, and nineteen years later, Wilde remarked that 'the little things of life are symbols...Your seemingly casual choice of a feigned name was, and will remain, symbolic. It reveals you'.¹²⁷ The literal and symbolic 'right naming' of Elizabeth-Jane intensifies the tragic search for the real identity of 'The Mayor of Casterbridge', and the end of his 'story' describes a triumphant assertion of the individual in that most certain of right namings:¹²⁸ 'To this I put my name. MICHAEL HENCHARD' (MC, XLV). But his demand to be forgotten¹²⁹ denies the potency of this assertion, ignores the working of memory and, as 'a piece of the same stuff that his whole life was made of' (ib.), accentuates the material and artificial construction of his life.

As he moves toward this certainty in himself, Henchard's greatest fear is that Elizabeth-Jane Newson should 'root out his image as that of an arch-deceiver' (MC, XLIII), so, unable to withstand his complicity in the great deceptive scheme of things, he

¹²⁶ One may add theology, too, in the 'right naming' of Adam and Eve, and their subsequent naming of the animals in Eden.

¹²⁷ Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis* (1905; London: Methuen & Co., 1949), p. 60.

¹²⁸ In February 1889, Hardy made the following observation after reading Plato's 'Cratylus': 'A very good way of looking at things would be to regard everything as having an actual or false name, and an intrinsic or true name, to ascertain which all endeavour should be made...The fact is that nearly all things are falsely, or rather inadequately, named' (EL, p. 284).

¹²⁹ Nominal effacement of Henchard's surname by Farfrae's occurs on two occasions. His marriage to Elizabeth-Jane blots out Newson as well, but that pertaining to his business is more devastating and appears as a kind of palimpsest. Two texts are written, but only one remains: 'She regarded the familiar gateway. A smear of decisive lead-coloured paint had been laid on to obliterate Henchard's name, though its letters dimly loomed through like ships in a fog. Over these, in fresh white, spread the name of Farfrae' (MC, XXXI).

rejects the artificiality of Casterbridge in favour of the reality of death. In perceiving Casterbridge as 'a mere painted scene' (*MC*, XLIV), Henchard acts as both observer and painter, but this reproductive sight engenders a sense of alienation and disappointment that what he took for actuality was nothing more than a duplication of a picture of actuality. His entire existence has been specular, a collection of portraits hanging in the series Hardy names 'my Exhibition of Wessex life' (*MC*, Pref). The conclusive use of the pictorial metaphor implicates the limitation of society's orthodox conventionality, its false moulding of reality, its bias toward idealization and exclusivity, and its criteria based on the most expedient details.

In 1865 Lewes despaired of contemporary literature's reliance upon 'imperfect eyesight, or upon imitation, which may be defined as second-hand seeing...The fashion is that of coat-and-waistcoat realism',¹³⁰ an apposite analogy. His complaint that 'artists have become photographers' because they little appreciate the cogency and 'importance of direct vision',¹³¹ of personal insight, found an advocate in Hardy:

The rage for 'realism', which is healthy in as far as it insists on truth, has become unhealthy in as far as it confounds truth with familiarity, and predominance of unessential details. There are other truths besides coats and waistcoats, pots and pans.¹³²

Only two years after the publication of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Hardy returned to the equivocal significance of 'social minutiae' (*PRF*, p. 119) in literature. A profitable reading of fiction shows how the 'exceptional fidelity' of social realists to 'life garniture and not life' means that 'in aiming at the trivial and the ephemeral they have...missed better things' (*ib.*). But Hardy does not refute the worth of meticulous observation out of hand; on the contrary, we should not

fail to understand that attention to accessories has its virtues when the nature of its regard does not involve blindness to higher things; still more when it conduces to the elucidation of higher things. (*ib.*)

¹³⁰ G.H. Lewes, 'The Principles of Success in Literature', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 (1865), 85-95, 'The Principle of Vision': 185-96, 'Of Vision in Art': 572-89, 697-709; continued in *Fortnightly Review*, 2 (1865), 257-68, 689-710 (1, pp. 185, 187).

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 1, pp. 187, 186.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 1, p. 589.

It was finding the 'material world...so uninteresting'¹³³ that encouraged Hardy to look deeper and to empathize with Pater that 'every object in the terrestrial world is an analogue, a symbol or counterpart, of some higher reality'.¹³⁴ In 1900, Ropes defined a symbolist as one 'who says something else. Unwilling or unable to put his thoughts into definite words, he uses certain terms or metaphors to shadow it forth' (*LN*, II, 2034),¹³⁵ an interesting inversion of Carlyle's determination to 'body it forth' (*SR*, I.XI). Hardy's technique synthesizes both strategies, and Gringson's more contemporary interpretation of the significance of peripherals offers an insight into Hardy's own mind: 'Objects are mean, or nothing; yet can all the same, if they are discovered by the right objectifier, elicit and exert benediction.'¹³⁶ Hardy, 'the right *subjectifier*', reproduces his personal experiences of material facts in a way which permits both perceiver and perceived access to a rare kind of transcendentalism.

'Ordinary men live among marvels and feel no wonder, grow familiar with objects and learn nothing new about them. Then comes an independent mind which sees', says Lewes.¹³⁷ Hardy's is that mind. Though his thorough 'attention to accessories' in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* seems to subvert his central thesis, Hardy's 'concern is less with the subject treated than with its treatment' (*PRF*, p. 120), for 'nothing that he sees but has more than a common meaning, but has two meanings' (*SR*, I.X). All artefacts work on two antagonistic levels simultaneously. They give mass, authenticity and credibility to 'the Casterbridge stage', yet their surface conveys a profound depth; materials are transparent as windows, but never relinquish their prosaic reality. They are symbolic props in a very real drama.

As early as 1865 Hardy's disgust of 'stage realities' disinclined him to 'push further in that direction' (*EL*, p. 72; Dec 1865),¹³⁸ yet, twenty-three years later in a characteristic inconsistency, he claims that 'the highest province of fiction' resides in 'the portraiture of scenes in any way emotional or dramatic' (*PRF*, p. 124). Indeed, it is

¹³³ William Archer, *Real Conversations* (London: Heinemann, 1904), p. 45.

¹³⁴ Pater, *The Renaissance*, p. 45.

¹³⁵ Arthur Ropes, 'Maeterlinck', *Contemporary Review*, LXX (March 1900), p. 435.

¹³⁶ Geoffrey Gringson, in 'A Note to Discoveries of Bones and Stones, and Other Poems' (London: Macmillan, 1971).

¹³⁷ G.H. Lewes, 'The Principles of Success in Literature', I, p. 191.

¹³⁸ See Hardy's poem, 'A Victorian Rehearsal' (*CP*, no. 923).

arguable that he conceived the function of his novels as essentially dramatic. *A Pair of Blue Eyes* begins with a list of *dramatis personae*, the stage-manager of the 1895 Preface alludes to 'all those convenient corners wherein I have ventured to erect my theatre for these imperfect dramas', and the 1912 General Preface finds Hardy justifying 'the geographical limits of the stage here trodden' (*GP*, p. 45) by referring to the precedent established by Classical drama. The decision, in the words of Johnson, 'to present the play of life'¹³⁹ in prose form does not fail to address the 'real' problem and, if anything, this artistic hybrid clarifies the issues under contention.

In 1890, Hardy noted from 'Stage-Realism - True and False' that 'a drama should not be real in the sense of exhibiting a verisimilitude of insignificant things' (*LN*, II, 1776),¹⁴⁰ and after visiting the Lyceum the following year, admired the staging even while expressing anxieties over the effect such artistry had on the perception of reality:

scenic perfection such as this only banishes one plane further back the jarring point between illusion and disillusion. You must have it *somewhere*, and begin calling in 'make-believe' forthwith, and it may as well be soon as late... and no elaborate scenery be attempted. (*EL*, p. 304; Jan 1891)

Hardy's mistrust of the influence wielded by the 'insincere' and 'meretricious' over the watchers is central: 'the staginess behind the footlights seems to flow over upon the audience' (*ib.*), a danger which he realized in *Casterbridge*. There, disingenuousness is an art to be cultivated and honed to the point where it can generate a convincing aura of 'respectability' while distancing the truth.

Perhaps with the theatricality of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* in mind, Hardy felt the need to qualify his preference for writing in prose. His essay, 'Why I Don't Write Plays' (1892), explains how narrative affords greater scope for getting nearer the heart and inner meaning of things than script, the latter exercising a detrimental exclusivity where 'clothes, furniture, plate, jewels, and other real and sham-real appurtenances' are concerned.¹⁴¹ The 'elucidation of higher things' (*PRF*, p. 119) to the playwright, Hardy

¹³⁹ Lionel Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy* (1894; rpt. London: The Bodley Head, 1923), p. 174.

¹⁴⁰ 'Stage-Realism - True and False', *Daily News* (Nov 3, 1890), p. 5.

¹⁴¹ In *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, ed. Harold Orel, p. 139. See Keith Wilson's *Thomas Hardy on Stage* (London: Macmillan, 1994), which studies Hardy's involvement in stage productions based on his works. Wilson focuses on the conflict between Hardy's desire to see his plots and characters brought to life on the stage, and his consciousness of the attending difficulties.

argues, is 'subordinated' to 'accessories',¹⁴² but such is not to infer that the multifarious references to Casterbridge as 'stage' are casual or capricious whims; Hardy exploits the approximation to the full. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* appropriates the 'constrained and arbitrary'¹⁴³ features of the theatre, turns the artificiality of the convention upside down, and, used in this way, blurs the distinction between 'the real and the sham-real'. The novel reworks the temporal and spatial conventions of both dramatic and realistic literature, and Hardy's imaginative reclamation and management of accessories that are ostensibly pedestrian endows them with a meaning beyond their decorative role. In all of the novel's overtly histrionic episodes, the characters, rather than acquiescing before the primacy of objects as objects, depend on these props in a manner which exposes a higher truth. Hardy's deceptive 'public eye' may see in 'the highest sensible phenomena ... only fresh or faded Raiment; yet ever, under this, a celestial Essence [is] thereby rendered visible' (SR, III.I).

Hardy's sense of his place in the current polemic may be dramatized in his contextualizing of Farfrae, yet there is no suggestion of synonymy. To the objective onlooker, Hardy presented himself as a non-conformist, Victorian literature's antagonist, its self-confessed 'Dark Horse' (EL, p. 178; Oct 1917); Farfrae, on the other hand, does not openly court hostility. Even so, like Hardy's presence in literary circles, Farfrae's presence in the business world disrupts received patterns, and there is a marked degree of authorial sympathy in his exposition:

Perhaps the difference was mainly superficial; he was to them like the poet of a new school who takes his contemporaries by storm; who is not really new, but is the first to articulate what all his listeners have felt, though but dimly till then. (MC, VIII)¹⁴⁴

Rather than declaring his fundamental difference, Hardy covertly states that his literary theories and practices, far from being revolutionary, are clarifying and surfacing a silent, unconscious intuition in all artists. As with Farfrae, there is no insinuation of radical dissonance or alienation as such; each man is collocated as the active guide into a new

¹⁴² 'Why I Don't Write Plays', p. 139.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Cp: 'There is no new poetry, but the new poet - if he carry the flame on further (and if not he is no new poet) - comes with a new note. And that new note it is that troubles the critical waters' (LY, p. 78; Jan 1899).

way of doing things. And this involves both a challenge and a risk. The herald must run the gauntlet of conservative dissenters who are all too ready to remind him that he is not among his own kind. Farfrae is finally accepted as Mayor and leads the community forward. Hardy still had a long way to go.

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VI

'A PAIR OF JAUNDICED EYES':¹
***THE WOODLANDERS* (1887) AND THE BLIGHTED TREE OF**
KNOWLEDGE

'The Poet's age is sad: for why?
 In youth, the natural world could show
 No common object but his eye
 At once involved with alien glow -
 His own soul's iris-bow.

'And now a flower is just a flower:
 Man, bird, beast are but beast, bird, man -
 Simply themselves, uncinct with dower,
 Of dyes which, when life's day began,
 Round each in glory ran.'²

The things which I have seen I now can see no more...
 ...there's a Tree, of many, one.
 A single Field which I have looked upon.
 Both of them speak of something that is gone.³

Hardy conceived the story which was to become *The Woodlanders* shortly after the serialization of *Far from the Madding Crowd*. As a "pastoral",⁴ *The Woodlanders* is the logical successor of the earlier work, but it is painful in a way that *Far from the Madding Crowd*, written at a time when Hardy was 'more of an optimist or less of an Emersonian',⁵ is not. A novel of rejection, *The Woodlanders* subverts the Weatherbury idyll and dismisses the techniques of its immediate predecessor as Casterbridge's reliance on 'the outer sense alone' submits before the Hintocks' 'blindness to material particulars' (*SF*, p. 137). Now 'the idea is all' (*EL*, p. 243; May 1886), 'the exact truth as to material fact ceases to be of importance in art' (*EL*, p. 243; Jan 1887), and essentials take ontological and perceptual precedence:

I don't want to see the original realities - as optical effects, that is. I want

¹ *W*, III. For a shortened and slightly different version of this chapter, see my "'A Pair of Jaundiced Eyes': *The Woodlanders* and the Blighted Tree of Knowledge", in the *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 26 (Dec 1997), 5-15.

² Robert Browning, 'Prologue' to *Asolando: Fancies and Facts* (1889), in *The Poetical Works of Robert Browning* (London: Oxford University Press, 1905; rpt. 1962), lines 1-10. Hardy read the poem in July 1890 and made extensive notes. See *LV*, II, 1754-66.

³ Wordsworth, 'Ode: Intimations to Immortality' (1802-6), in *Wordsworth: Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 2nd edn., 1936; rpt. 1974), lines 9, 51-3. Wordsworth also traces 'the Poet's age' in 'Resolution and Independence' (1802): 'We Poets in our youth begin in gladness; / But thereof come in the end despondency and madness' (lines 48-9).

⁴ An ambiguous term. See n. 58. See Dennis Taylor, 'Hardy and Wordsworth', *Victorian Poetry*, 24 (Winter 1986), 441-54.

⁵ William Wallace, *Academy*, XXXI (April 9, 1887), 251-2; rpt. *Thomas Hardy: Critical Assessments*, ed. Graham Clarke, 4 vols (Sussex: Helm Information Ltd, 1993), I, 163-4 (I, 163). Hereafter cited as *TH:CA*.

to see the deeper reality underlying the scenic, the expression of what are sometimes called abstract imaginings. (*EL*, p. 242; Jan 1887)

Hardy's refusal to document 'original realities' at this stage in his career was a reactive stand against current realistic prescriptions:

Novel-writing as an art cannot go backward. Having reached the analytic stage it must transcend itself by going still further in the same direction. Why not by rendering as visible essences, spectres, etc., the abstract thoughts of the analytic school? (*EL*, p. 232; March 1886)⁶

This conviction is critical, and given the relative contemporaneity of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *The Woodlanders*, it is not a surprise that Carlylean transcendentalism spills into the later work. In 1884, Hardy noted from *The French Revolution* (1837) that, 'as in all living things, there is the central idea, the animating principle round which the matter gathers & develops into shape' (*LN*, I, 1337).⁷ *The Mayor of Casterbridge* clothes this 'central idea' literally and figuratively, but *The Woodlanders*, written when 'Hardy was currently much exercised over the whole question of the nature of reality and the relationship between the ideal and the real',⁸ shadows forth this 'spectral' dimension, and interrogates the primitive 'matter' of Ideas and Consciousness. Finding Carlyle inadequate in this area, Hardy looked to the 'analytic school' and the 'essence of Herbert Spencer':⁹

Phenomenon [appearance] without noumenon [reality] is unthinkable... We are at once obliged to be conscious of a reality behind appearance, and yet can neither bring this consciousness of reality into any shape, nor can bring into any shape its connection with appearance. (*LN*, I, 1335)

By engaging Spencer's puzzle, Hardy discovered how to link objective and subjective through the simultaneous generation of multiple states of consciousness, and, consequently, multiple-visioned realities. The process involves the mind in numerous

⁶ Hardy's 'visible essences' are the equivalent of Carlyle's 'Souls rendered visible' (*SR*, I.III). It is interesting to note that Hutton, discussing Hardy's description of Marty's 'abstract humanism', finds 'the quality of abstractness...wobly wanting. When Mr Hardy becomes metaphysical, he becomes obscure' (*TH:CA*, I, 154) and this has the adverse effect on the 'lifelike' (I, 155) potential of the narrative. Cp. 'I feel a great sense of unreality around me...The unreality in which we are living' (*LN*, I, 1421, 1423; condensed from Auberon Herbert, 'A Politician in Trouble about His Soul' (part IV), *Fortnightly Review* (March 1, 1883), 358-75). Hardy cited these phrases during the late 1880s.

⁷ James Anthony Froude, *Thomas Carlyle: A History of his Life in England 1834-1881* (London, 1884), I, 87-92.

⁸ Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography* (New York: Random House, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982; rpt. 1992), p. 285.

⁹ Carlyle ridiculed Spencer as 'the most immeasurable ass in Christendom' (*Oxford Companion to English Literature*, ed. Paul Harvey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), p. 739).

'contradictions', but however hard we try to know the 'Unknowable' we must ultimately 'accept a formless consciousness of the inscrutable' (*LN*, I, 1335).¹⁰ Even 'things known to us are manifestations of the Unknowable' (*LN*, II, 2087),¹¹ Kant's Noumenon or Thing-in-Itself underpinning all phenomena, and the Heroic pursuit of Transcendental Philosophy exhibits things as 'a kind of vesture or Sensuous Appearance' under which lies 'the essence of them',¹² Fiske's ineffable Reality. Having found a firm scientific basis for such explorations, Hardy was clear in his purpose: 'The Realities to be the true realities of life, hitherto called abstractions. The old material realities to be placed behind the former, as shadowy accessories' (*EL*, p. 232; March 1886).

Such abstract conceptualizing in the context of Spencer and Carlyle is significant as *The Woodlanders* continues the intellectual debate begun in *The Return of the Native*. But whereas the former withstands the onslaught of 'the irrepressible New' (*RN*, 1.I), the later capitulates before the 'dreadful enlightenment' which has 'spread through the mind' (*W*, XLII) like a contagion, and 'primitive feelings' are annihilated by 'modern nerves' (*W*, XL). This eventuality explains the work's melancholic resignation, and just as Hardy watched the world being dispossessed of its ancient joyousness, so he too was overwhelmed by the writings of Darwin, Spencer and Sully. *The Woodlanders* realizes Arnold's warning about 'the strong infection of our mental strife',¹³ and, as with *The Return of the Native*, works out its epistemological obsession in an environment imagined as a text; only now the Answers glossed among the leaves of the voluminous Tree of Knowledge¹⁴ have been successfully read. The studious eye comes away 'jaundiced', dispossessed and educated out of its 'clear gaze' (*W*, XLIV).

¹⁰ Herbert Spencer, 'Last Words about Agnosticism and the Religion of Humanity', *Nineteenth Century*, XVI (Nov 1884), 835.

¹¹ Spencer, *First Principles*, 4th edn (London, 1880), p. 143. Though denying consistency of view to, as well as agreement with, Spencer, F.H. Bradley's theories on 'Things in Themselves', in *Appearance and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co.; New York: Macmillan, 1893), Ch. XII, pp. 127-32, is somewhat similar: 'we have on one side phenomena, in other words, things as they are to us...while on the other side they are Things as they are in themselves and as they do not appear, or, if we please, we may call this side the Unknowable'. This may be because 'Reality is too good to be known', yet Bradley spends much of the chapter supporting his belief that 'the doctrine of a Thing in itself is absurd' (pp. 128, 131).

¹² Thomas Carlyle, 'Lecture V: The Man of Letters', in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, & the Heroic in History* (1841), intro. Michael K. Goldberg (Oxford and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 133-67 (p. 135).

¹³ Matthew Arnold, 'The Scholar-Gipsy' (1853), in *The Poems of Matthew Arnold*, ed. Miriam Allott (London and New York: Longman, 2nd edn., 1979), line 222.

¹⁴ This is not necessarily synonymous with the Tree of Life in that tasting the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge actually confers a kind of death. Coleridge's 'De Profundis Clamavi' (1806), in *Coleridge: Poetical Works*, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), calls for Death to 'blow the dry Leaves from the Tree!.../ And take a Life that wearies me' (lines 2, 4). See Andrew Enstice, 'The Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge', in *The Novels of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Anne Smith (London: Vision Press, 1979), pp. 9-22.

Hardy pronounced at the time of writing *The Woodlanders* that 'to see beauty in ugliness is the province of a poet' (*EL*, p. Aug 1886), but the novel fails to satisfy this proviso and instead inverts the aim of *The Return of the Native* to 'see the beauty in ugliness' (*EL*, p. 158; April 1878). Eight years later, and full of bitterness, Hardy proclaimed 'Nature...an arch-dissembler...*Nothing* is as it appears' (*EL*, p. 231; Dec 1885).¹⁵ Only a month before this outburst he had returned to *The Woodlanders* 'in a fit of depression, as if enveloped in a leaden cloud' (*EL*, p. 230; Nov 1885), and the end of the year found him 'sadder than many previous New Year Eves had done' (*EL*, p. 231; Dec 1885).¹⁶ It was symptomatic of the time, as Ruskin acknowledged: '[T]hese are much *sadder* ages than the early ones,...sadder...in a dim wearied way, - the way of ennui, and jaded intellect, and uncomfortableness of body and soul.¹⁷

The cause of this reorientation provides the key to *The Woodlanders* for its 'narrator is the dramatized expression of [Hardy's] state of mind',¹⁸ contemporary critics noting its 'melancholy' tone and identifying its 'subdued key' as 'belonging to Mr Hardy's present mood'.¹⁹ As early as 1877, Hardy recorded from Helps that 'poets & painters are discovering that the break of day is not joyous...Morn comes in so mournfully ...Throughout nature there is...a depressing blankness of colour (*LN*, I, 1009),²⁰ but it was only now that this latent despondency surfaced, bringing with it the Arnoldian eye of

¹⁵ Cp. G.H. Lewes, 'The Course of Modern Thought', *Fortnightly Review*, XXI (1877), 317-27: 'things are just what they appear' (p. 319).

¹⁶ As Callicles says of Empedocles, in 'Empedocles on Etna' (1852), so one might say of Hardy:

There is some root of suffering in himself,
Some secret and unfollowed vein of woe,
Which makes the time look black and sad to him. (I. i. 151-3)

This mood was obviously contagious, as were the images used to express it. During the early 1880s, Christina Rossetti wrote 'An Old-World Thicket', in *The Poetical Works of Christina Georgina Rossetti*, ed. William Rossetti (London: Macmillan, 1928), which is close enough to Hardy's own sentiments to warrant serious consideration. The poem begins with a view of the benign aspects of a wood in which creatures care for one another, and even the birds are vegetarians. But once the observer closes her physical eye and drowns in introspectiveness, there is heard only a

...universal sound of lamentation...

Nought else but all creation

Moaning and groaning wrung by pain or fear. (lines 71, 74-5)

Still 'my bodily eyes were closed and dark', and 'More leaden than the actual self of lead / Outer and inner darkness weighed on me' (lines 92, 96-7). The wood, and every creature in it, is perceived as being in harmony with the speaker's terrible mourning, and, in a turn of phrase which would be quite at home upon Hardy's lips, remarks that 'Trees rustling, where they stood / And shivered, showed compassion for my mood' (lines 138-9). However, once the speaker becomes attuned to a 'heavenly harmony' (line 143) and opens her eyes, the beauty of the world changes her mood back to one of appreciative joy and hopefulness. Hardy's persistent cloud does not allow this.

¹⁷ John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: George Allen, 1903-12), V, 321. Hereafter cited parenthetically in text as *Works*.

¹⁸ Daniel Schwartz, 'Beginnings and Endings in Hardy's Major Fiction', in *Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Dale Kramer (London: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 17-35 (p. 27).

¹⁹ Anon., *Athenaeum* (March 26, 1887), 414; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 151-2 (I, 151).

²⁰ Cp. Tennyson's *Maud: A Monodrama* (1855), in *The Complete Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1898): 'Morning arises gloomy and pale, / No sun, but a wannish glare' (I. Vi. i.).

the 1950s which, 'Disenchanted by habit, and newly awaking, / Looks languidly round on a gloom-buried world'.²¹ The Yalbury prospect opens 'when grey shades, material and mental, are so very grey', and, following the novel's first night, an abyss as black as 'the ante-mundane Ginnung-Gap' (*W*, III), dawn arrives as a grotesque 'bleared white visage...like a dead-born child' (*W*, IV). Giles regards his lost cottage through 'the wet greys of a Winter dawn' (*W*, XV), and Fitzpiers is enveloped by a 'grim grey dawn' which bleeds all things until they are 'cold and colourless' (*W*, XXX). These misty experiences project the overseeing eye's internal disposition for 'Nature always wears the colour of the spirit'.²²

Though depressing and obfuscating, these vapours correspond to the enigmatic 'mysteries of life' (*EL*, p. 242) and seem predicated upon Ruskin's similar association:

Not only is there a partial and variable mystery thus caused by clouds and vapours throughout great spaces of landscapes; there is a continual mystery caused throughout all spaces, caused by the abstract infinity of things. WE NEVER SEE ANYTHING CLEARLY...so that there is literally no point of clear sight, and there never can be. (*Works*, VI, 75-6)²³

Fogs express the theme of modern isolation, Hardy's 'leaden cloud' manifesting as Winterborne's trial in Old South's tree, a scene in which sight and space are stereographically manipulated.²⁴ This technique allows Hardy to create a surreal "space" in his fiction into which characters can withdraw, physically and / or mentally, at times of crisis. Pondering his dissolved engagement with Grace, Giles climbs 'higher into the sky',²⁵ 'a sudden fog' arrives and he severs himself

²¹ Arnold, 'A Modern Sappho' (1849), lines 23-4.

²² Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature: Addresses and Lectures*, in *Works of Emerson*, 12 vols (New York: AMS Press, 1968), I, 7-77 (p. 11). Cp. 'the grey glooms of a ghost-eyed despondency' (*D*, I.I.iii). See also Tennyson's conjuring of 'the gray-eyed mom' in 'Mariana' (1830), line 31.

²³ They are also distinctly Tennysonian, 'Tithonus' (1860) opening with a woodland enshrouded with gloomy skeins:

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapours weep their burthen to the ground. (lines 1-2)

Cursed with immortality, Tithonus is nothing but a 'gray shadow',

A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream
The ever silent spaces of the East,

Far-folded mists, and gleaming hills of mom. (lines 11, 8-10)

²⁴ Mark Simons's informative essay, 'Hardy's Stereographic Technique', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XIII:3 (Oct 1997), 86-93, describes how Victorian stereography 'bridged the gap between still photography and cinematography' (p. 88). He explores Hardy's experimentation with the method in his fiction, and includes this scene in *W* where 'the characters relate to each other not across space, but through it...This distinction creates a less static environment' (p. 90; Simons's emphasis).

²⁵ This phrase was not present in either the MS or serialized version. The addition adds emphasis to Giles's celestial direction.

from all intercourse with the sublunary world. At last he had worked himself so high up...and the mist had so thickened that he could only just be discerned as a dark grey spot on the light grey zenith. (*W*, XIII)

Much of their communication is achieved visually rather than verbally, and Giles's expressive retreat into the ethereal is a deliberate 'cutting off' from and rejection of the terrestrial in favour of a mysterious, self-enclosed subjectivism.²⁶ Giles's disembodied words echo the tree's articulate rustlings 'like the sheet-iron foliage of the fabled Jarnvid wood' (*W*, VII), and as Grace strains her eyes to see him 'motionless and silent in that gloomy Niflheim or fogland which involved him', he is soon 'completely enclosed... from her view' (*W*, XIII).

The sentiment of this particular episode, and the novel's general bias, indicate the workings of specific influences; De Laura persuasively points to Arnold's *Balder Dead* (1855),²⁷ which, wrapped in 'Clouds of white rolling vapours', describes a journey 'o'er a darksome tract, which knows no sun'.²⁸ For Hardy, Arnold and Ruskin, 'clouds and vapours' do more than contrive different degrees of 'mystery'; they condense the *mal du fin de siècle* in a very real sense. *Balder Dead* is Arnold's escape from and mastery of a dangerous subjectivism, and repeatedly toward the end of the poem he equates mists and solipsism in 'the gulph / Of the deep inner gloom' (*BD*, III, 388-9), that 'gloom which round me even now / Thickens, and to its inner gulph recalls' (*BD*, III, 546-7). Balder, among 'the leaden mist' of 'the stretching cloudy plain' (*BD*, III, 441, 443) of Hell, finally 'Faded from sight into the interior gloom' (*BD*, III, 553) in a withdrawal which transcends the merely physical. The Hintocks' general significance, like Giles's specific movement, lies in their plangent, expressive utterance of this contemporary temper.

²⁶ This 'withdrawal' is also sexual, for, unlike Fitzpiers who is an active observer, that is, one who acts upon the suggestiveness of the masculine gaze, Giles is passive, escapes his sexuality, and chooses solitude. For Julie Grossman, 'Thomas Hardy and the Role of the Observer', *English Literary History*, 56 (Fall, 1989), 619-38, 'fog, darkness, sleep, blindness: these are the metaphors for characters who are not conscious enough of their desires to act on them' (p. 629). Frank Giordano, 'The Martyrdom of Giles Winterborne', *Thomas Hardy Annual: No. 2*, ed. Norman Page (London: Macmillan, 1984), 61-78, offers an unusual Freudian interpretation of Giles as a suicidal character. Kevin Z. Moore, *The Descent of the Imagination: Postromantic Culture in the Later Novels of Thomas Hardy* (London and New York: University of New York Press, 1990), agrees that 'Giles' Wordsworthian "wise passiveness" and single vision is not a help to him; rather it is this very passiveness which is the source of his defeat and destruction' (p. 22). See also Cates Baldridge, 'Observation and Dominance in Hardy's *The Woodlanders*', in *Victorian Literature and Culture*, ed. John Maynard (New York: AMS Press, 1993), pp. 191-209.

²⁷ David De Laura, 'The Ache of Modernism' in Hardy's Later Novels', *English Literary History*, 34 (Sept. 1967), 380-99 (p. 384 n. 11). See Lesley Higgins, 'Strange Webs of Melancholy': Shelleyan Echoes in *The Woodlanders*, *Thomas Hardy Annual: No. 5*, ed. Norman Page (London: Macmillan, 1987), 38-46, who traces Shelley's allusion to show how Hardy uses it to define "the ache of modernism".

²⁸ Arnold, *Balder Dead* (1855), II, 298, 126. Hereafter cited parenthetically in text as *BD*.

Arnold's poetical disclosure of his deepest feeling, that he has been born into an 'iron time / Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears'²⁹ quite unlike the long past 'happier day' (*BD*, III, 513),³⁰ foreshadows Hardy, and both, 'Waiting the darkness of the final times' (*BD*, I, 124), send their representatives into this vacuous eventuality. Living in 'the wood / Of Jarnvid...where the trees are iron' (*BD*, III, 329-331), Loki banishes Balder to 'The plains of Niflheim, where dwell the dead' (*BD*, I, 172) just as Grace forces Giles³¹ into this realm in a prolepsis of his death. Like Balder, Giles finds the real world too painful and prefers the phantasmal 'cheerless land' of 'feeble shades' and 'apathetic ghosts' (*BD*, II, 181-2, 196). Nature has been drained of its vitality and meaning; Giles's and Balder's desire to lose themselves in the shadow-land completes the desolation and makes restitution impossible.

The reason is common to Arnold and Hardy. Balder is surfeited with life's 'blood, and ringing blows, and violent death' (*BD*, III, 140), the struggle for existence has become a burden, and the promise of permanent absence from the fray a balm: 'Mine ears are stunned with blows, and sick for calm. / Inactive therefore let me lie, in gloom' (*BD*, III, 508-10). The Hintocks, too, resounds to the evolutionary 'wars and broils, which make / Life one perpetual fight' (*BD*, III, 505-6), and its overtly anti-romantic³² configuration inaugurates Modern Wessex. Moreover, by systematically destroying the Romantic conception of the Imagination, Hardy shows how Science has demythologized the natural world and appropriated its awesome mysteries. Indeed, 'all nature is in his eyes...a field for the conquests of science',³³ particularly at this juncture, yet as early as 1875 Hardy sympathized with the Schlegelian position that 'the deepest want &

²⁹ Arnold, 'Memorial Verses' (1850), lines 43-4. Iron and greyness converge in the 'steely stars' (*TD*, L) which direct Tess's fate, and may have been predicated upon the metallic iciness of the celestial inhabitants of Tennyson's 'sad astrology': stars are 'Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes' in 'iron skies' (*Maud; A Monodrama* (1850), I. XVIII. iv).

³⁰ The revival of a new Golden Age is anticipated 'Far to the south' (*BD*, III, 518). Hela's shadowy and 'dim world' (*BD*, I, 315), on the other hand, lies 'toward the northern ice' (*BD*, I, 145) and thus provides another probable source of the "cold" intellectualism of *RN*. When 'The tempest of the latter days hath swept', the remaining Gods will repair southwards and reassemble an earth 'More fresh, more verdant than the last' (*BD*, III, 522, 529).

³¹ It is interesting to note that the tenth bridge on the road to Hela's frozen world 'spans with golden arches Giall's stream' (*BD*, I, 148); both of Giles's names seem to find their source here, his surname deriving from the Dorset dialect word for a frozen stream which flows in winter.

³² Arnold's 'Memorial Verses' is a lamentation over the loss of 'poetic voice' of the Romantics, particularly Byron, Goethe and Wordsworth. The passing of the latter to 'the mournful gloom' (line 39) of Hades, leaving the living in an 'iron time' (line 43), is very similar to the bereavement occasioned by Balder's death. See Patricia O'Neill, 'Poetics of a Post-Romantic', *Victorian Poetry*, 27 (Summer 1989), 129-45; Moore, *The Descent of the Imagination*. Merryn Williams, 'Hardy the Victorian', in *A Preface to Hardy* (London and New York: Longman, 1976; 2nd edn. 1993), pp. 54-84, asserts that Hardy's 'real roots were in the English Romantic tradition' (p. 56), and continues, rather questionably, that 'perhaps he had more in common with Wordsworth than with any other Romantic writer' (pp. 56-7).

³³ Lionel Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy* (1894; rpt. London: The Bodley Head, 1923), p. 89.

deficiency of all modern Art lies in the fact that the artists have no Mythology' (*PNB*, pp. 18-19; June 1875; *LN*, I, 118).³⁴ And although Johnson forwards a positive qualification - 'the artist in Mr Hardy can overpower the man of science'³⁵ - it is debatable whether this subjection actually occurs in *The Woodlanders*: Fitzpiers is victorious and Hardy's sensitivity to current mythopoeic inadequacy accounts for much of the novel's depressing hue. Something has disappeared from the earth, and not even the most powerful imagination can restore it.

Hardy's reaction to the scientific usurpation of the natural draws upon Carlyle's model; the Machine of the Universe obliterates the Tree of Existence:

Igdrasil, the Ash-tree...is the Tree of Existence...Considering how human things circulate, each inextricably in communion with all...I find no similitude so true as this of a Tree...The 'Machine of the Universe', - alas, do but think of that in contrast!³⁶

Nature is 'void of Life, of Purpose, of Volition';³⁷ Teufelsdröckh moans that his 'whole Universe, physical and spiritual, was as yet a Machine!' (*SR*, II.III); and Carlyle decries how 'the living Tree Igdrasil...has died out into the clanking of a World-Machine...a dead mechanical steam-engine',³⁸ an epithet he adopted for the reductive schema of the eighteenth-century philosophers whom he blamed for making the world 'a dim, huge, immeasurable steam engine'.³⁹ Although Nature's soul has been warped by Science,

³⁴ 'Mythology, according to the comparative mythologists, is, forsooth, only a disease in language - literal understanding of primitive metaphors' (*LN*, I, 578; John Pentland Mahaffy, *Social Life in Greece from Homer to Meander* (London, 1874), p. 323).

³⁵ Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, p. 90.

³⁶ Carlyle, 'Lecture I: The Hero as Divinity', *On Heroes, Hero-Worship*, pp. 3-36 (p. 19). See also 'Signs of the Times' (1829), in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, ed. H.D. Traill, 5 vols (London: Chapman & Hall, 1899; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1969), II, 56-82 (p. 64).

³⁷ Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus: The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1870), Bk. II, VII. Hereafter cited parenthetically in text as *SR*. The figure of the 'huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine, rolling on, in its dead indifference' (ib.) appears repeatedly, and Roy E. Gridley, *Browning* (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), uses this image to reinforce the pervading spirit of the age: 'Childe Roland shares a terrible angst with contemporary documents like Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* and Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*' (p. 88). Gridley places this "gloomy hieroglyphic" poem of Browning's in the evolution of a spiritual wasteland as expressed through Tennyson's *The Holy Grail* (1869), Thomson's *The City of Dreadful Night* (1874), Hardy's 'The Darkling Thrush' (1900), and Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) (pp. 88-9).

³⁸ Carlyle, 'Lecture V: The Hero as Man of Letters', *On Heroes*, pp. 133-67 (pp. 147, 149). Interestingly enough, George Eliot, one of Carlyle's greatest admirers, forges a connection between this image, philosophy, science and microscopes in *Adam Bede* (1859), ed. Stephen Gill (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980): 'Ingenious philosophers tell you, perhaps, that the great work of the steam-engine is to create leisure for mankind. Do not believe them: it only creates a vacuum for eager thoughts to rush in...Even idleness is eager now...prone even to scientific theorising, and cursory peeps through microscopes' (VI. 52).

³⁹ Carlyle *Lectures on the History of Literature*, ed. J. Reay Greene (New York: Scribner, 1892), p. 191. Lawrence inherits both this sentiment and the metaphors of machine and rainbow in *The Rainbow* (London: Methuen, 1915; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1949). The former, transferred from nature to the city, becomes a literal symbol of mechanistic slavery: Ursula rejects the colliery, 'the great machine which has taken us all captives...it only had to be forsaken to be inane, meaningless', but Winnifred 'worshipped the impure abstraction, the mechanisms of matter'. This 'monstrous mechanism...held all matter, living or dead' (Ch. XII). The rainbow remains a symbol of the dream, the ideal. And by the time of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928; New York: Grove, 1957; London: Heinemann, 1963), the destruction wrought by the city on the Hardy-esque 'grey' woods is complete: 'The air was soft and dead...grey and clammy and silent, even from the shuffling of the collieries...The end of all things! In the wood all was utterly inert and motionless, only great drops fell from

although the Tree has been disfigured along with its human equivalents, the mechanistic contraption suffers a latent dysfunction; the Whole is irremediably flawed: 'the Universe is to [Nietzsche] a perfect machine which only requires thorough handling to work wonders. He forgets that the universe is an imperfect machine' (*LY*, p. 160; Feb 1914).⁴⁰ This 'ill-working instrument' (ib.) includes Hardy's response to 'novel-writing as a trade' which he 'went about...mechanically' (*EL*, p. 239; July 1886) during these years, and it is no accident that the structure of *The Woodlanders* is as 'mechanically' engineered and set as the scattered man-traps. Marty's hair⁴¹ is the first spring and, by the end, though it may have misfired a few times, the Machine topples the Tree.

Discussing these metaphors, Jacobus identifies the 'depletion of energy' resulting from accumulative influences as the 'attenuation of vigour into quiescence, passion into elegy, endurance into renunciation'.⁴² And if knowledge, the potent residue of 'the analytic school', heralds the end of a dream then, as Rehder says, 'the awakening is a prelude to destruction, as if knowledge were forbidden...Knowledge comes with the force of a blow'.⁴³ In 'To Outer Nature' (*CP*, 37), written in the 1880s, Hardy's desperate pleading with the visions of earlier days - 'show thee as I thought thee' - is heart-rending as 'Experience', colluding with this terrible 'birth of consciousness' ('Before Life and After', *CP*, 230), displaces the old 'iris-hued' view of reality. The rainbow image was a popular commodity, and Browning, having read *The Woodlanders*, transferred it to the 'Prologue' to *Asolando* (1889).⁴⁴ His poet is a Peter Bell, an anti-Wordsworthian who delights in things being 'simply themselves', who asks whether 'falsehood's fancy-haze', the 'outer seeming' as seen through a bejewelled 'optic glass', is preferable to the 'inmost

the bare boughs...For the rest, among the old trees was the depth of grey, hopeless inertia, silence, nothingness' (Ch. 6). Science's fight with Imagination evolves into Industry's with Agriculture: 'The new England blots out the old England. And the continuity is not organic, but mechanical' (Ch. 11).

⁴⁰ Hardy may have been helped to this view by his reading of a review of Francis Galton's *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Development* which appeared in *The Spectator*, LVI (Aug 11, 1883): 'Galton on the defects, evil and apparent waste of our globe. - "We perceive around us a countless number of abortive seeds & germs...& it is possible that this world may rank among other worlds as one of these"' (*LN*, I, 1311). This anticipates Grace's view that 'in all this proud show some kernels were unsound as her own situation, and she wondered if there were one world in the universe where the fruit had no worm' (*W*, XXVIII). It also foreshadows Tess's perception of the universal Tree as bearing worlds "like the apples on our stubborn-tree. Most of them splendid and sound - a few blighted" (*TD*, IV). Earth, of course, is of the latter kind. Cp. Spirit Ironie's reference to 'Life's queer mechanics' and Spirit Sinister's to 'all the gory clock-work of the show' (*D*, 2.IV.v).

⁴¹ See Peter W. Coxon, 'Hardy's Use of the Hair Motif', *Thomas Hardy Annual: No. 1*, ed. Norman Page (London: Macmillan, 1982), 95-114.

⁴² Mary Jacobus, 'Tree and Machine: *The Woodlanders*', *Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Dale Kramer (London: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 116-34 (p. 120).

⁴³ R.M. Rehder, 'The Form of Hardy's Novels', in *Thomas Hardy After Fifty Years*, ed. Lance St John Butler (London: Macmillan, 1977), pp. 13-27 (p. 24).

⁴⁴ See Browning's poem heading this chapter.

self' of 'the naked very thing'.⁴⁵ For him, imagination is delusive; yet Hardy, grieving the death of creativity, sees a 'vision appalling' when the 'one believed in thing' loses its 'old endowment' and is erased in the topically entitled 'At Waking' (CP, 174). Awareness of the deprivation devastates the perceivers, and Arnold's cry, '*The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I!*'⁴⁶ rings throughout *The Woodlanders*.

By the late 1870s Hardy agreed 'That there hath passed away a glory from the earth',⁴⁷ Wordsworth's sorrow over the dilution of his childhood joy in the 'iris-bow'⁴⁸ becoming, for Hardy, analogous to the loss borne by the Poet in the present age.⁴⁹ Only months after completing *The Woodlanders*, Hardy, attracted to a like mind, recorded Brunetiere's opinion that Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal* presented 'a vegetation fantastic & hideous, with bizarre leafage, with disquieting colourations, corrupt perfumes...a flora of vice & putridity' (LN, II, 1663).⁵⁰ The modern eye, bringing with it a new 'means of seeing', sees a deformed reality into existence: 'Last century it was the glorification of Nature...Now we find ourselves...finding in her alleged imperfections & apparent cruelties' (LN, I, 1301),⁵¹ and when Hardy's 'Mother Mourns' (CP, 76) it is because

Man's mountings of mindsight I checked not,
Till range of his vision
 ...finds blemish
Throughout my domain.

⁴⁵ Browning, 'Prologue' to *Asolando*, see lines 8-20.

⁴⁶ Matthew Arnold, 'Thyrsis' (1864-5), line 60. At the start of the poem, the lost vision focuses on recalling 'The signal-elm' (line 14) which is 'bright / Against the west - I miss it! is it gone?' (lines 26-7). At the climax, the vision is briefly reclaimed in an ecstasy of colour that is unusual for Arnold:

...and see,
Backed by the sunset, which doth glorify
The orange and pale violet evening-ak, /
Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree! the Tree! (Lines 157-60).

The capitalization iconoclasts the object.

⁴⁷ Wordsworth, 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality' (1802-6), line 17. See Hardy's 'A January Night' (CP, 400).

⁴⁸ See his 'Rainbow' poem.

⁴⁹ Cp. Wordsworth's 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality':

The things which I have seen I now can see no more...
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream? (lines 9, 56-7)

Wordsworth realizes that 'Though nothing can bring back the hour / Of splendour in the grass, or glory in the flower' (lines 181-2), man will strive to find strength in what remains behind, 'In years that bring the philosophic mind' (line 190). And finally,

The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality. (lines 200-2)

⁵⁰ Frederic Brunetiere, 'Charles Baudelaire', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 81 (June, 1887), 697-701 (pp. 697-8).

⁵¹ Anon., 'Mr Footman on Modern Unbelief', *The Spectator*, LVI (April 21, 1883), 514-5. Cp. Oscar Wilde: 'When I look at a landscape I cannot help seeing all its defects...Nature is so imperfect' ('The Decay of Lying: An Observation', *Nineteenth Century*, XXV (1889), 35-56; rpt. *The Writings of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Isobel Murray (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 215-39 (p. 215)).

Nature regrets the evolution of an 'insight' which can 'read my defects with a god- glance' (CP, 76), an appropriate metaphor. The scientific eye's 'germ of consciousness' quickens and unblinds us to the 'old-established ignorance / Of stains and stings' ('The Aerolite', CP, 734), and the 'glow' and 'radiance' once sensible to the youthful poet is denied to the mature thinker whose mind has been by 'Darkness - overtaken!' (CP, 37). Wordsworth's apostrophe, 'Our meddling intellect / Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things',⁵² is brought to its logical conclusion.

Toward the end of the novel Grace remarks, "'there has been an Eye watching over us'" (W, XLVII); it belongs to a narrator staining everything with a 'modern' hue. In *Far from the Madding Crowd* it is axiomatic that 'we colour and mould according to the wants within us whatever we survey' (FMC, Ch. II); *The Woodlanders* shows that these 'wants' are shaped by the 'analytic school' of Darwin and Spencer, and Hardy's eye filters the vision even as it recreates it. Such perceptual and expressive involvement places the narrator as an extra consciousness within the novel, and creates a double-visioned reality.⁵³ 1825 found Macaulay announcing the irreconcilability of poetic and scientific delineations: 'We cannot unite the incompatible advantages of reality and deception, the clear discernment of truth and the exquisite enjoyment of fiction',⁵⁴ and Hardy, accepting the challenge, generated an awkward vision which fed upon 'the struggle between the critical & the creative faculty' (LN, I, 1229).⁵⁵ the eye enchanted by the iris-bow perceives a beautiful world, but the 'jaundiced' alternative sees the ugliness that modern philosophies have taught it to find. An Imaginative reality is precipitated only to be subverted by the Scientific.

The processes at work behind this visual dialectic are explored in 'In a Wood', subtitled 'See *The Woodlanders*' (CP, 40), which, as Barton notices, reflects Hardy's 'temperamental standpoint' and 'presents just that side of reality from which most of us avert our gaze, comfortably unaware of our disingenuousness'.⁵⁶ It explains what Hardy

⁵² Wordsworth, 'The Tables Turned' (1798), lines 25-6.

⁵³ J.E. Barton, 'The Poetry of Thomas Hardy' (1923), in Johnson's *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, pp. 259-95, finds 'something abnormal in the kind of imagination which can drench external things with a subjective and personal essence' (p. 272).

⁵⁴ See Thomas Babington Macaulay's 'Milton', in *Critical and Historical Essays*, 3 vols (London: Everyman's Library, 1907), in which he states emphatically that 'analysis is not the business of the poet. His office is to portray, not to dissect' (I, 153-6).

⁵⁵ 'Lange's History of materialism - Vol II', *Spectator*, LIV (July 9, 1881), 900.

⁵⁶ Barton, 'The Poetry of Thomas Hardy', p. 273.

wants to find in nature, why he does not find it, and what he finds instead. Just as Arnold's solution to the 'strange disease of modern life' is to 'plunge deeper in the bowring wood... With a free, onward impulse',⁵⁷ so Hardy seeks sanctuary from the city, the place of 'men's unrest',⁵⁸ among the 'sweet comradeship' of the trees. Yet the expectation of 'sylvan peace' is mercilessly razed:

But, having entered in,
Great growths and small
Show them to men akin -
Combatants all!
Sycamore shoulders oak,
Bines the slim sapling yoke,
Ivy-spun halters choke
Elms stout and tall.

Hardy does not labour under a Wordsworthian exegesis of nature's superlative purity, what Hume would have termed the '*poetical* fiction of the *golden age*' which illustrated nature 'as the most peaceable condition'.⁵⁹ Instead, this is 'the *philosophical* fiction of the

⁵⁷ Arnold, 'The Scholar-Gipsy' (1853), lines 207, 213. See also 'In Harmony with Nature: To a Preacher' (1844-7), which was published in 1849 as 'To an Independent Preacher, who preached that we should be "In Harmony with Nature"; rpt. with former title in 1877. Arnold's present concern is with the distinction between the 'law for man' and the 'law for thing'. See the exclamation in *Literature and Dogma* (1873): 'Ah, what pitfalls are in that word *Nature*!' In 'In Harmony with Nature', Arnold sees the potential of a more positive moral dimension to mankind:

Know, man hath all which Nature hath, but more,
And in that *more* lie all his hopes of good.
Nature is cruel, man is sick of blood;
Nature is stubborn, man would fain adore. (lines 5-8)

The whole poem seems to contradict 'Quiet Work' (1849) which acknowledges that, set against nature's silent working, 'on earth a thousand discords ring, / Man's fitful uproar mingling with his toil' (lines 9-10), but 'When true' (line 3) suggests that we can only be 'in harmony with Nature' by learning a moral lesson from it. Still, the final sentiment is that 'Nature and man can never be friends' (line 13). Hardy not only refutes any kind of moral superiority where mankind is concerned, but ironically rewrites Wordsworth's vision of the 'Sweet' ethical 'lore which Nature brings':

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can. ('The Tables Turned' (1798), lines 20-4)

For Hardy, the natural 'Cause of Things...is neither moral nor immoral, but *amoral*' (LY, p. 217; Dec 1920). Perhaps the only figurative area of accord between Hardy and Wordsworth on this point is the injunction to 'Close up those barren leaves' (line 30) of the conventional books of science and art, and to read *instead* the 'leaves' of the woodland.

⁵⁸ See W.W. Greg, *Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama* (London: A.H. Bullen, 1906): 'What does appear to be a consistent element in the pastoral as known to literature is the recognition of a contrast...between pastoral life and some more complex type of civilization' (p. 4). William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (1935; rpt. Norfolk, Connecticut: New Directions, 1950), discovers non-rural versions of pastoral. See Robert Y. Drake, 'The Woodlanders as Traditional Pastoral', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 6 (Autumn, 1960), 251-7, which argues that 'pastoral' is not a term of abuse but a major tradition. Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), feels that Hardy is misread if we force 'a neo-pastoral convention of the countryman as an age-old figure, or a vision of a prospering countryside being disintegrated by...the railways or agricultural machinery' (p. 208), onto the novels. Michael Squires, *The Pastoral Novel: Studies in George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, and D.H. Lawrence* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1974), offers the pastoral novel as a variation of traditional pastoral in its combination of 'realism with the pastoral impulse' (p. 2). Shelagh Hunter, 'Thomas Hardy: Character and Environment', in *Victorian Idyllic Fiction: Pastoral Strategies* (London: Macmillan, 1984), pp. 167-208 (rpt. in part in *Thomas Hardy: Three Pastoral Novels*, ed. R.P. Draper (London: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 194-202), contends that Hardy is the most inventive of modern writers of pastoral. Annabel Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology: Virgil to Valery* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), shows how pastorals since Virgil have been used for political and social criticism. See also Owen Schur, *Victorian Pastoral: Tennyson, Hardy, and the Subversion of Forms* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989). Lesley Higgins finds that 'Pastoral Meets Melodrama in Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, VI:2 (June 1990), 111-25. Robert Langbaum, *Thomas Hardy in our Time* (London: Macmillan, 1995), sees 'the obvious definition of "pastoral" as an idealising picture of country life implying its superiority to the city' (p. 67).

⁵⁹ David Hume, *Hume's Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding, and Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1748, 1750),

state of nature' which is 'painted out as a state of mutual war and violence', and rather than separating man and nature, city and wood, Hardy discovers an absolute connection in the 'perpetual war of all against all'.⁶⁰ Alerted to Hardy's images, Browning reworked them: 'A City, yes, - a Forest, true, - / But each devouring each' (*LN*, II, 1758),⁶¹ for, as Carlyle knew, 'If Nature is one, and a living indivisible whole, much more is Mankind, the Image that reflects and creates Nature, without which Nature were not' (*SR*, III. VII). Johnson's appreciation gets to the crux of the matter: 'Mr Hardy realizes the world of men and things in a severe harmony'.⁶²

Emerson imagines trees as men who 'seem to bemoan their imprisonment, rooted in the ground',⁶³ and this proximity in Hardy is evidenced aurally - "'It seems to me as if they sigh because they are very sorry to begin life in earnest - just as we be'" (*W*, Ch. VIII)⁶⁴ - and visually through somatic imagery, typical of a text dedicated to contorted and dismembered body parts.⁶⁵ What impresses most is the awesome category of marshal catastrophes 'between...neighbours' which augments the suffering of the anthropomorphized trees in *The Return of the Native*: 'trees close together [were] wrestling for existence, their branches disfigured with wounds resulting from their mutual rubbings and blows' (*W*, XLII). Among Hardy's own 'darkling forest-paths' (*BD*, II, 63), nature destroys what it seeks to create:

Above stretched an old beech, with vast arm-pits, and great pocket-holes in its sides, where branches had been removed...Beneath these were the rotting stumps...rising from their mossy setting like black teeth from green gums. Further on were other tufts of moss...like little fir-trees, like plush, like malachite stars; like nothing on earth except moss. (*W*, XLII)

ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), p. 189.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Browning, 'Bad Dreams III', 26-7.

⁶² Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, p. 171.

⁶³ Emerson, 'Nature', III, 181.

⁶⁴ Cp. Arnold, 'Empedocles on Etna' (1852), who sees that everything,
Of earth, and air, and sea,
In men, and plants, and stones,
Hath toil perpetually,
And travails, pants, and moans. (I. ii. 291-5)

⁶⁵ Arnold employs the same figures, the bloody battles of the mortal and immortal warriors suggesting the evolutionary forest fight when read in this context: 'And all day long they there are hacked and hewn, / 'Mid dust, and groans, and limbs lopped off, and blood' (*BD*, II, 15-16). Moreover, Balder's funeral pyre is procured through violence. The Gods make their way to 'the dark forests' (*BD*, II, 52), and soon there is heard the sound

Of crashing falls; for with his hammer Thor
Smote 'mid the rocks the lichen-bearded pines...
And lopped their boughs, and clove them on the sward. (*BD*, II, 55-6, 59)

Such visions invalidate Hutton's appraisal that 'the only really pleasant part is the picture of the woodlands themselves'. Hardy's 'sympathies', far from being 'rich in beauty',⁶⁶ draw instead from Shelley's 'The Triumph of Life' (1822) where Rousseau's ghost is envisaged as a rotting 'old root which grew / To strange distortion out of the hill side'.⁶⁷ This sentient root is a complicated inversion of numerous Igdrasils, a decaying Silenus who claims that non-existence is preferable to a rainbow-world of ideals realized only as insubstantial 'figures on...false and fragile glass', phasms or 'shadows' painted on a 'bubble...as it passe[s] away'.⁶⁸ In addition, Hardy's view of the root emblem combines Wordsworth's apocalyptic decay of the pine forest and Arnold's decimation of the same - a token of the destruction of the Imagination - and reduces it to a mossy growth of 'little fir-trees'. Hitherto powerful figures of metaphysical correspondence are reduced and negated through tautology, and though the metonyms remain, they become absurd and obsolete in that final gesture of self-mockery. 'Imagination could trace amid the trunks and boughs...funereral figures' (*W*, XX), a prefiguration of its own impending demise. The 'jaundiced eye' sees that Nature's Tree is as deficient as Society's Machine:

Here, as everywhere, the Unfulfilled Intention, which makes life what it is, was as obvious as it could be among the depraved crowds of a city slum. The leaf was deformed, the curve was crippled...the lichen ate the vigour of the stalk, and the ivy slowly strangled to death the promising sapling. (*W*, VII)⁶⁹

The opening reference to 'starry moss'⁷⁰ lures us into a grotesque, self-reflexive vision fascinated by its repulsive ugliness. Hardy's immediate 'Intention' is to move us through

⁶⁶ R.H. Hutton, *Spectator* (March 26, 1887), 419-20; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 153-5 (I, 155). See also Charles E. May, 'Far from the Madding Crowd and The Woodlanders: Hardy's Grotesque Pastorals', *English Literature in Transition*, 17 (1974), 147-58; Jeffrey S. Cramer, 'The Grotesque in Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders*', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 8 (1978), 25-9.

⁶⁷ P.B. Shelley, 'The Triumph of Life' (1822), in *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1905; rpt. 1961), lines 182-3.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, lines 287-91.

⁶⁹ In total contrast, see Wordsworth's 'Nutting' (1800) which Hardy has ironically inverted:

Through beds of matted fern, and tangled thickets,
...I came to one dear nook
Unvisited, where not a broken bough
Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious sign
Of devastation. (lines 15-19)

Coventry Patmore also takes a more positive view; Hardy's Tree of Death becomes an 'Arbor Vitae' (1878), in *The Poems of Coventry Patmore*, ed. Frederick Page (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949):

With honeysuckle, over-sweet, festoon'd;
With bitter ivy bound;
Terraced with funguses unsound;
Deformed with many a boss
And closed scar, o'er-cushioned with deep moss...
Stands, and so stood a thousand years ago,
A single tree. (no. 248, lines 1-5, 9-10)

Despite the tree's adverse situation, 'its heart' is vital and devoid of 'decay'.

this view and, by making us see something else, overthrow the pastoral structure equating nature/slum; whether his overall 'Intention' remains 'Unfulfilled' in the novel as a whole is more problematical. But in the present reality of the woodland setting, poet and novelist see that the ultimate 'design' of the hapless abstraction is carried out.

Robinson observes that 'for the most part the tension in Hardy's works is not between rival individuals but between individuality and everything in the post-Darwinian world that threatens to crush it'.⁷¹ *The Woodlanders* shows 'rival individuals' constructing the reality that deconstructs previous illusions, addresses the alienation of the perceiver from themselves and the observed, and sublimates a plural vision communicated in terms of *The Origin of Species* (1859). After all, as disillusionment incited a reconsideration of the ontological framework, humanity 'might be helped to a provisional view of the universe by the recently published Life of Darwin, and the works of Spencer (*EL*, p. 269; Feb 1888).⁷²

Before the primacy of evolutionary rather than divine forces was made known, says Darwin, we could 'behold the face of nature bright with gladness',⁷³ but in the context of 'The Struggle for Existence', nature's 'shows' alter with the recognition that

the birds which are idly singing round us mostly live on insects and seeds, and are thus constantly destroying life; and we forget how largely these songsters... are destroyed by birds and beasts of prey.⁷⁴

Nature's glamour is corrupted when perceivers 'come to consciousness' and realize that 'analogous to the deceits in life, there is...a similar effect on the eye from the face of

⁷⁰ See Jean Boase-Beier, "'Mats of Starry Moss": A Passage from Hardy's *The Woodlanders*', in *Essays in Memory of Michael Parkinson and Janine Dakyns*, ed. Christopher Smith (Norwich: University of East Anglia Press, 1996), pp. 203-5.

⁷¹ Roger Robinson, 'Hardy and Darwin', in *Thomas Hardy: The Writer and His Background*, ed. Norman Page (London: Bell & Hyman, 1980), pp. 128-50 (p. 146). See also Roy Morrell, 'Hardy, Darwin, and Nature', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 2 (1986), 28-32. One of the most important studies to date in this area is James Krasner's *The Entangled Eye: Visual Perception and the Representation of Nature in Post-Darwinian Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). This study explores the limitations and possibilities inherent in the act of perceiving and describing nature; theories of visual perception are applied to the 'readings' of nature in nineteenth-century novels; such post-Darwinian environments are markedly psychological. But whereas Darwin's descriptive writings emphasize the fluidity of species' transmutations in a kaleidoscopic process and are rendered in a perceptual chaos of inchoate images, Krasner finds Hardy working to simplify perceptions of landscape by focusing on humanly-significant forms.

⁷² In the same way that Hardy lost his ability to see the beautiful in nature through his analytic readings, so Darwin was similarly deprived of his aesthetic sense. As Johnson explains, 'In early life, [Darwin] loved great poetry, painting, and music: immersed in scientific studies, he lost those tastes, and loathed the great arts...[H]is devotion to science caused an atrophy of his aesthetic tastes'. The only literature which he could enjoy was romance, the work of novelists who 'wrote fictions, not facts' and 'pourtrayed life in bright colours' (*The Art of Thomas Hardy*, p. 212).

⁷³ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, ed. J.W. Burrow (1859; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), Ch. III, p. 116.

⁷⁴ Emerson, like Hardy and Darwin, recognizes this dualism: 'Nature is always consistent, though she feigns to contravene her own laws...She arms and equips an animal to find its place and living..., and, at the same time, she arms and equips another animal to destroy it' ('Nature', III, 181).

external nature' which induces a sense of 'disappointment'.⁷⁵ For Hardy too, 'Before the birth of consciousness all went well' (*CP*, 230), but Nature's 'first sweetness' (*CP*, 37) is soured when seen through an evolutionist's eye. There may be a 'superabundance of food' and Nature may be 'prodigally bountiful' (*W*, XXVIII), but this extreme fecundity and ripeness tips the balance into decay: hedges are 'bowed', a superfluity of acorns are 'cracked underfoot', and the 'burst husks of chestnuts' lie left to perish.⁷⁶ We may 'behold the face of nature bright with gladness'⁷⁷ during Giles's and Grace's walk on High Stoy Hill, but it is more often witnessed engaged in bloody carnage as the Darwinian pattern implodes. Animal preys on plant: 'The smaller trees were nibbled by rabbits' (*W*, VII); animal hunts animal: 'owls...had been eating mice...stoats...had been sucking the blood of rabbits' (*ib.*); and man hunts not only animals - Giles 'set his nightly gins...to catch the rabbits' which eat his lettuce (*W*, IX) - but other men, as the man-traps testify.⁷⁸

Hardy's undeviating 'harmony of view with Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Comte, Hume, Mill, and others (all of whom, as a matter of fact, I used to read more than Sch[openhauer])' (*CL*, VI, 259), distinguished him from his contemporaries. Whereas others were working on or to the Darwinian formula, Hardy let the concept work upon him and did not advance 'a single scientific theory' (*LY*, p. 219; Dec 1920) or 'co-ordinate' a coherent 'philosophy' or 'view of life'⁷⁹ because he felt one did not exist. The same applies to Hardy's familiarity with Spencer's *First Principles* (1880) which he described as

a book which acts, or used to act, upon me as a sort of patent expander when I had been particularly narrowed down by the events of life. Whether the theories are true or false, their effect upon the imagination is unquestionable, and I think beneficial. (*CL*, I, 24-5)

⁷⁵ Emerson, 'Nature', III, 181, 192.

⁷⁶ 'All things betray the same calculated profusion' in the need to reproduce (Emerson, 'Nature', III, 186).

⁷⁷ Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, Ch. III, p. 116.

⁷⁸ Cp. the sentiment expressed by the hero of Tennyson's *Maud*; *A Monodrama* (1855) when under the influence of a 'morbid eye' (III. VI. iii):

For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal;
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd by the shrike,
And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey. (I. IV. iv)

On the man-trap, see Jonathan C. Glance, 'The Problem of the Man-Traps in Hardy's *The Woodlanders*', *Victorian Newsletter*, 78 (Aug 1990), 26-9. Peter Widdowson, *Thomas Hardy* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1996), considers 'the motif of the man-trap...in illustrating the non-realist symbolism of the destructive processes of class relations deployed in this anti-pastoral satire' (p. 60), and offers the "man-trapping" of Grace as a "false" conclusion to the novel. It certainly does "mis-fire".

⁷⁹ Hardy, 'Apology' to *Late Lyrics and Earlier*, in *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, pp. 50-58 (p. 53).

Sympathetic with Spencer's conception of 'The Unknowable', Hardy, possibly in response to Spencer's declaration that 'the scientist...alone *knows* that under all things there lies an impenetrable mystery',⁸⁰ was 'utterly bewildered to understand how the doctrine that, behind the knowable, there must be an unknown, can be displaced' (*LY*, p. 168; early 1915).⁸¹ Hardy's 'Unfulfilled Intention' as the creative equivalent of this scientific theory is disconsolate enough, but his reaction to 'The Knowable' in Part Two of *First Principles* is more disturbing. If 'dissolution', 'the absorption of motion and concomitant disintegration of matter',⁸² is the evolutionary terminus, then progress is a movement toward 'omnipresent death'.⁸³ For Hardy, 'all is sinking / To dissolubility' ('Genitrix Caesa', *CP*, 736), and *The Woodlanders*, tracing this journey toward 'the Universal Death',⁸⁴ delineates a world teetering on 'the very brink of an absolute void, or the ante-mundane Ginnung-Gap' (*W*, VII). And, as if everything has already arrived at this final pass, mists shroud all with a 'cold corpse-eyed luminousness' (*W*, XLII).

This dead eye is prescriptively infirm, ugly and infects the observed. House lights are beheld 'winking more or less ineffectually' (*W*, I) through the gloom; the sovereigns exchanged for Marty's locks 'suggest a pair of jaundiced eyes' (*W*, III); the men's 'foggy lanterns appeared...to have wan circles around them, like eyes weary with watching' (ib.); plants are 'weak lidless eyes' (*W*, XLI). Its antithesis is the vital 'eye of imagination' (*W*, XXXV), the creative faculty which, to Lange, is one of 'the noblest treasures of mankind' and 'can afford him a felicity which nothing can replace' (*LN*, I, 1229). This plastic power, 'far removed from the Materialist' (ib.), moulds pedestrian phenomena into 'whatever...the fancy chose to make of them' (*W*, XXXV), and given the composite jaundiced imagination scanning the Hintocks, the precipitate is grotesque.

According to Grahame, Emerson felt that

the poet, who re-attaches things to Nature and the Whole - re-attaching even artificial things of violation of Nature to Nature by a deeper insight - disposes very easily of the most disagreeable facts.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Herbert Spencer, 'Progress: Its Law and Cause', *Westminster Review*, n.s. XI: 2 (April 1857), 445-85 (p. 485).

⁸¹ Hardy may well call Spencer's treatise 'Your knowings of the Unknowable declared' (*D*, 3. VII.ix).

⁸² Herbert Spencer, *First Principles*, Vol I of *A System of Synthetic Philosophy*, 11 vols (London: Williams & Norgate, 1880), I, 228.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, I, 413.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 529; *LN*, '1867' Notebook, entry 8.

⁸⁵ Kenneth Grahame, 'The Romance of the Rail', in *Pagan Papers* (London and New York: The Bodley Head, 1904), p. 24. And

Hardy's subversive application of this 'deeper insight' intensifies rather than reduces 'the most disagreeable facts', and focuses on the violation Nature suffers when the artificial is re-attached, when Fitzpiers is grafted onto the Tree. The warp and weft of cause and effect seems borrowed from Symonds' *Studies of the Greek Poets* (1876):

Each act, as it has had immeasurable and necessary antecedents, will be fruitful of immeasurable and necessary consequents; for the web of the world is ever weaving, and to drop a thread in it is utterly impossible. (LN, I, 638)⁸⁶

The pattern in *The Woodlanders*' tapestry, interleaving poetical and empirical, designs a region where the Nature-Imagination bond is disintegrating,⁸⁷ where Science, Fitzpiers, is cutting the threads. Each Hintock member sits beneath the 'world-shadowing tree' (BD, II, 220), Igdrasil,⁸⁸ which 'has its roots deep down in the kingdoms of Hela or Death',⁸⁹ and the Whole is iconocized in South's psychosomatic identification with the elm:

'He says that it is exactly his own age, that it has got human sense, and sprouted up when he was born on purpose to rule him...Others have been like it afore in Hintock.' (W, XIV, XIII)

everything that is, no matter how mundane, the poet 'sees them fall within the great order not less than the bee-hive or the spider's geometrical web' (p. 25).

⁸⁶ J.A. Symonds, *Studies of the Greek Poets* (London: Smith & Elder, 1876), p. 398. Hardy, along with Pater, Ruskin and Carlyle, perception of separateness is not the ultimate reality. Hardy's creed saw the individual as an integral part of 'one great network or tissue' which 'quivers in every part when one point is shaken, like a spider's web' (EL, p. 232; March 1886). Although characters seem 'isolated' and 'self-contained', alternative perspectives reveal alternative interpretations: 'looked at in a certain way, their lonely courses formed no detached design at all, but were part of the pattern in the great web of human doings then weaving in both hemispheres, from the White Sea to Cape Horn' (W, III). And when speaking of the

...fibrils, veins,

Will-tissues, nerves, and pulses of the Cause,

That heave through out the earth's compositure (D, III. I. D),

Hardy is accessing a concept which had cast its thread throughout nineteenth-century thought. Arnold also sees that 'All things the world which fill / Of but one stuff are spun' ('Empedocles on Etna' (1852), I. ii. 287-8). It resembles Pater's 'magic web' which is 'woven through and through us like that magnetic system of which modern science speaks, penetrating us with a network, subtler than our subtlest nerves' (Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (London: Macmillan, 1922), p. 231), our physical bodies constituting part of 'a design in a web, the actual threads of which pass out beyond it' (p. 234). Carlyle picks up on the metaphor in his talk of 'Cloth-webs and cob-webs' (SR, III. VIII) and despite the superficial disharmony concomitant with life, concedes that 'all, were it only a withered leaf, works together with all' (SR, I. XI). For Carlyle, the smallest light is indicative of an individual mind which is not isolated, 'a detached, separated speck, cut-off from the whole Universe', but is 'a little ganglion, or nervous centre, in the great vital system of Immensity' (ib.). This biological formula is also employed by Darwin: 'the several members of each class are connected together by the most complex and radiating lines' to the extent that it would be impossible to 'disentangle the inextricable web of affinities between the members of any one class' (Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, Ch. XIII, p. 415). And it is inconceivable to omit the web figure which is threaded throughout the tapestry of *Middlemarch* (1872), ed. W.H. Harvey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), especially that representative declaration of literary intent: 'I...have so much to do in unravelling certain human lots, and seeing how they were woven and interwoven, that all the light I can command must be concentrated on this particular web' (II. 15). Like her contemporaries, Eliot emphasizes the interlocking fibres of this figure, its 'subtle interlacings' which reach out to others in 'visions of completeness'; it is, above all, a 'mutual web' (IV. 36).

⁸⁷ See Tess Cosslett, *The 'Scientific Movement' and Victorian Literature* (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press; New York: St Martin's Press, 1982), esp. pp. 132-68. Cosslett offers useful comments on Fitzpiers, and argues that, for Hardy, the scientific fact of our physical bond with Nature fails to expand into an overall coherent scientific vision of oneness.

⁸⁸ For the Gods in Valhalla, 'the ash Igdrasil' marks 'their judgement place' (BD, II, 32-3) and is nourished by the 'fount / Of wisdom, which beneath the ash-tree springs' (BD, II, 219-220).

⁸⁹ Carlyle, 'Lecture I: The Hero as Divinity', *On Heroes*, p. 19; repeated in 'Lecture III: The Hero as Poet', pp. 67-97 (p. 87). This Tree even finds a mention in Rossetti's 'The Blessed Damsel', in *The Poetical Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, ed. William Rossetti (London: Ellis and Elvey, 1891): 'Wetwo will lie i' the shadow of / That living mystic tree' (lines 85-6).

This tree leads Giles into the celestial fog-land of pastoral myth and bridges the chasm between wood and human, spirit and body, Nature and Society, idea and object, even while it signifies dislocation: ' " The tree 'tis that's killing me. There he stands, threatening my life... 'Tis my enemy, and will be the death of me " ' (*W*, XIII).⁹⁰ In 1888 Hardy wrote that 'apprehension is a great element in imagination. It is semi-madness, which sees enemies, etc., in inanimate objects' (*EL*, p. 268; Jan 1888),⁹¹ but the present anti-romantic vision rationalizes imagination away as neurotic fancy, and reason proscribes a sympathetic relationship with nature.

Old South⁹² fetishizes over a figure of alienation not integration, his efforts at archaic association proving fatal when modernized by Fitzpiers. Nature may be inimical to obsessive humanity, but the decision first to hew off the lower boughs and then to raze it completely is the most devastating 'experiment' or 'remedy' (*W*, XIII) practised in the novel. "'We'll inaugurate a new era,'" boasts the Doctor as tradition is axed by progress. The power of Coleridge's Imagination to communicate 'a microscopic power'⁹³ to the physical eye is revoked and superseded by the rational, bodily eye, and, following the Fall, previously 'inaccessible nests could be examined microscopically' (*W*, XIV). But "'what's a tree beside a life!'" exclaims Fitzpiers. His 'half-sight of science...overlooks that wonderful contiguity which subsists between man and the world',⁹⁴ and the Machine's precipitous severing of the Tree's roots typifies an outsider's arrogant misunderstanding of the organic and hitherto 'unbroken system of correspondences'.⁹⁵ This individualistic

⁹⁰ Kinsley Palmer, *Oral Folktales of Wessex* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1973), explains that rural peoples believed that trees had lives of their own as agents of good or evil, and participated in man's life choosing either to punish or protect (p. 79).

⁹¹ Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, explains that 'the habit of fear and the habit of literality, unchastened by higher habits of thought, produce just that rustic "fetishism", so strongly realized by Mr Hardy' (p. 154).

⁹² This naming is important; the South and all it signifies, is Old, obsolete, archaic.

⁹³ S.T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (1817), ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, vol VII *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn, 16 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), VII (ii), Ch. XVIII, p. 58-88 (p. 83). Considering eyes, Coleridge remarks that 'the power of imagination...has predetermined their field of vision, and to which, as to its organ, it communicates a microscopic power' (pp. 82, 83).

⁹⁴ Emerson, *Nature: Addresses*, I, 69, 68. Cp. G.H. Lewes, 'The Principles of Success in Literature', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 (1865), 85-95, 'The Principle of Vision': 185-96, 'Of Vision in Art': 572-89, 697-709; 2 (1865), 257-68, 689-710: 'the philosopher is not entitled to assume that Nature sympathizes with man...But the poet is at perfect liberty to assume this' (1, p. 575). Matthew Arnold's 'The Scholar-Gipsy' (1853) offers a similar kind of lament. Though the 'learning' gathered by the Scholar during his time among the gipsies is never imparted to the rest of the world, both the knowledge and the Scholar's quest are symbolic: what seems lost and beyond recall, for the poet - Arnold as much as Hardy - and his age, is 'the power of imagination' which will 'bind', unify all (from Glanvill; used by Arnold in the 'Advertisement' of 1854). In this respect, 'The Scholar-Gipsy' continues the theme structuring Empedocles on Etna' (1852), that of the debilitating effects of 'sick fatigue, languid doubt' ('The Scholar-Gipsy', line 164) and scepticism on the modern mind.

⁹⁵ Pater, *The Renaissance*, p. 45. This tree has sustained Giles, but his complicity in its destruction seems to invoke its vengeance - he loses his house in the beginning of a series of catastrophes - but it is Fitzpiers's initial action against the tree which sets the tragedy in motion. Moreover, from a modernist perspective - that of 1921 - 'it was the first great step in undoing, the first great phase of chaos, the substitution of the mechanical principle for the organic, the destruction of the organic purpose, the organic unity...It was pure organic disintegration and pure mechanical organization. This is the first and finest state of chaos' (D.H. Lawrence, *Women in Love* (1921; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), Ch. XVII). The tree/machine figure occurs several times in the novel.

approach to a community working within the law of Nature is, like the premature buying of Grammer Oliver's brain, ill-considered and, as Jacobus notes, stained with 'the fearfulness of a broken taboo'.⁹⁶

The Doctor is a second-rate Schiller whose 'greatest faculty', says Carlyle, 'was a half-poetical, half-philosophical imagination'.⁹⁷ Furthermore, in the context of the Arnoldian analogue, Fitzpiers is a scientific not a natural 'Physician of the iron age',⁹⁸ a parody of Goethe, an antithesis of 'the great doctor' Wordsworth.⁹⁹ As 'a nucleus of advanced ideas and practices' (*W*, XIV), he accords with 'this iron time / Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears';¹⁰⁰ yet the presence of 'so modern a man in science and aesthetics' (*W*, XXIII) in the primitive woods is an awkward anomaly, 'a tropical plant in a hedgerow', a spurious import. Prejudiced against his 'quick, glittering empirical eye, sharp for the surface of things if not for nothing beneath' (*W*, XIV), the narrator patronizes Fitzpiers's intellectual eclecticism (he reads 'philosophical literature', 'rank literatures of emotion', and 'the books and *materiel* of science' (*W*, XVII)),¹⁰¹ and dissects the results gathered from a scientific practise of idealistic theories, especially where love is concerned. One moment, Edred responds to Grace as 'the bright shade of some immortal dream' (*W*, XVI); the next, Shelleyan lyricism is supplanted by clinically-phrased analogies:

People living insulated...get charged with emotive fluid like a Leyden jar with electric, for want of some conductor to disperse it. Human love is a subjective thing - the essence itself of man, as that great thinker Spinoza says - *ipsa hominis essentia* - it is a joy accompanied by an idea which we project against any suitable object in the line of our vision, just as the rainbow iris is projected against an oak, ash, or elm tree indifferently.' (*W*, XVI)¹⁰²

Fitzpiers's philosophical disquisition on the subjective nature of love undermines his earlier romanticism while the human body, formerly a 'shape of brightness', is reduced to a practical instrument, a 'jar' charged with a sensational current.¹⁰³ Such phraseology

⁹⁶ Jacobus, 'Tree and Machine', p. 125.

⁹⁷ Thomas Carlyle, *The Life of Friedrich Schiller* (1825; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1969), p.192.

⁹⁸ Matthew Arnold, 'Memorial Verses' (1850), line 17.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, line 63.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, lines 43-4.

¹⁰¹ Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, groups Angel and the doctor among Wessex's 'irritable egoists...Some of them become laughingstocks of their own pretensions: Clare and Fitzpiers' (p. 190).

¹⁰² Cp. Carlyle's contention that 'atheistic science babbles poorly...with scientific nomenclatures, experiments and what nots, as if it were a poor dead thing, to be bottled up in Leyden jars' ('Lecture I: The Hero as Divinity', *On Heroes*, p. 9).

¹⁰³ The German origin of Leyden jar seems to be generally related to the Germanism of the first-generation Romantics, and specifically

is anything but felicitous,¹⁰⁴ yet Pater believed that contemporary prose might well assimilate and naturalize terminology more akin to modern science, the language's 'resident aliens'. Whether Hardy manages this integration successfully is another matter, but the analogy registers an odd juxtaposition which articulates what he felt the critical was doing to the creative. By this stage 'the sciences appear to conquer the natural world, and the philosophies attempt the mysterious',¹⁰⁵ indeed, 'were all the qualities of things apparent to Sense, there would no longer be any mystery. A glance would be Science'.¹⁰⁶ The demystifying, 'glittering empirical eye' realizes the full potential of that prophetic eye of 'cold philosophy' in *Lamia* (1820):

Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?
There was an awful rainbow once in heaven:
We know her woof, her texture; she is given
In the dull catalogue of common things.
Philosophy will...
Conquer all mysteries...
Unweave a rainbow.¹⁰⁷

Hardy probably read Ingleby's 'The Ideality of the Rainbow' (1865) which, tracing how 'the theory of earth's "rich scarf" was being...evolved by Kepler, De Dominis, and Newton',¹⁰⁸ then passes the enigma on to philosophy. To 'the eye...of common sense', the rainbow stands for 'an objective reality',¹⁰⁹ but consensus regarding its composition is wanting. Developing Muller's belief that it is the excited retina which is seen, Ingleby proposes that if a seen 'object is the stimulated retina, it follows that the external world of sight is a vision of the retinal impressions...The retina, in fact, *is* the world without',¹¹⁰

connected with Goethe's use of the electrochemical image in his *Elective Affinities* (1807). Teufelsdröckh also defines 'LOVE' as 'the universal Spiritual Electricity', and alludes to the 'electric glance' (SR, II.V) of feminine eyes.

¹⁰⁴ See A.L. Rowse, 'Hardy's Vocabulary', *Contemporary Review* (August 1994), 90-3. Rowse discusses Hardy's flawed vocabulary. A determination to say exactly what he sees or feels may explain some of the curious instances of invented language, yet Hardy transcends these imperfections.

¹⁰⁵ Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, p. 1.

¹⁰⁶ Lewes, 'The Principles of Success in Literature', 1, p. 575.

¹⁰⁷ John Keats, *Lamia* (1820), Part II, line 229-37, in *The Poems of John Keats*, ed. Miriam Allott (London and New York: Longman, 1970).

¹⁰⁸ C.M. Ingleby, 'The Ideality of the Rainbow', *Fortnightly Review*, 2 (Aug-Nov, 1865), 571-8 (p. 571). Kepler's *Dioptrice* was published in 1611, as was De Dominis' *De radiis visus et lucis*. Descartes' *Dioptrique* and *Meteores* followed in 1638. Three other important works which appeared contemporary with Newton's initial research were James Gregory's *Optic Promota* (1663), Grimaldi's *Physico-Mathesis* (1665), and Robert Hooke's *Micrographia* (1665-7).

¹⁰⁹ Ingleby, 'The Ideality of the Rainbow', p. 574.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 575-6.

and the rainbow 'a clue to a sound theory of visual perception'.¹¹¹ It is equally, by inference, of considerable ontological import, and his argument proceeds to bring, like Fitzpiers, rainbow and tree into close proximity:

It seems to me...that the visible tree is the effect of my act of vision, not the cause of it. In the act of seeing a phantom that has no substantial reality, such as the rainbow, I am introduced to this original objecting power of sense.¹¹²

But the perceptions of one person are not identical to those of another, and 'no two eyes ...can see one and the same rainbow...[T]here are as many rainbows as there are eyes beholding'.¹¹³ As with reality.

Ingleby's thesis gives philosophy a fair hearing but is inconclusive; Hardy, on the other hand, bestows the 'key' to the arc on science. Fitzpiers's presence is first revealed to Grace by the fluid colour changes of the light which 'shone blue as sapphire...then ...passed through violet to red' (*W*, VI) from his window, his chemical rainbow-castings signifying that his responses, rather than being wholly subjective in the Berkeleyan sense, originate in objective realities. In this revised form, the rainbow is indicative of mutability as opposed to stability, and the end not the continuation of transcendental associations.¹¹⁴ The Iris myth was first unwoven by Newton's *Opticks* in 1704, a scientific treatise which, proposing to explain the Colours of the Rain-bow'¹¹⁵ and thus formulate a theory based on observation which refuted imaginative speculation into things' hidden workings, denatured nature and man, and challenged the poet.¹¹⁶ Goethe, confronting this position, saw a considerable epistemological barrier in the work; the Romantics saw 'a dangerous, intellectualist alienation, for, in their conception, the eye is

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 576.

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 577-8.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 572.

¹¹⁴ That is, unlike Wordsworth's rainbow which teaches the value of 'binding' generations 'by natural piety', Fitzpiers's is rather a representation of severance and exhaustion; once the link is lost, the Romantic poet would rather die. This is exactly what Hardy allows to happen in the Hintlocks, the distorted and deformed version of the Quantocks.

¹¹⁵ Isaac Newton, *Opticks, or A Treatise of the Reflections, Refractions, Inflections and Colours of Light* (1704; 4th edn. 1730; New York: Dover, 1952), Bk I, Part II, Proposition IX.IV, pp. 168-78 (p. 168).

¹¹⁶ Cp. the hero of Tennyson's *Maud; A Monodrama* (1855), who denounces the excesses of both the scientist and poet:

The man of science himself is fonder of glory, and vain,
An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded and poor;
The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into folly and vice.
I would not marvel at either, but keep a temperate brain. (I. IV. vii)

The irony is that he is destined to experience a less than 'temperate brain' during his madness.

the perfect organ of presence in the world'.¹¹⁷ Lamb and Keats agreed that Newton 'had destroyed all the poetry of the rainbow by reducing it to the prismatic colours'¹¹⁸ just as Hardy shows Fitzpiers dispossessing love, construed as an iris by Shelley,¹¹⁹ of its essential inscrutability. In complying with Lamb *re* Newton's reductive scheme, Keats concurs that when a perceived phenomenon is rationalized, the rationale itself invalidates the object; the explanation becomes the reality, the perception the illusion. The cold, critical eye destroys the awful in imaginative literature - 'What is now proved was once only imagin'd'¹²⁰ - and makes a sorry recompense in the form of knowledge.

Fitzpiers graphically articulates this dilemma: the Ineffable Rainbow strikes the Tree of Knowledge and surrenders its secret to intellect. Hardy may concede, like Thomson, that only ignorant rustics see the rainbow as a 'bright Enchantment',¹²¹ but he does not share Thomson's contempt. And whereas Thomson applauds Newton's work for letting 'the charm'd eye'¹²² see a 'showery Prism' unfolding - or unweaving - into the 'various Twine of Light',¹²³ Hardy berates Knowledge for unravelling the mysterious beauties of love and rainbow, leaving in their place left a lifeless fact. In this context, *The Woodlanders*

offers us a reading of a wide range of existential problems such as those concerned with the epistemological status of an imagination once asserted to be a powerful substantiating agent for various perceptions of truth, beauty, and reality.¹²⁴

¹¹⁷ Annie Escurat, 'Thomas Hardy and J.M.W. Turner', in *Alternative Hardy*, ed. Lance St John Butler (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 205-225 (p. 207). See esp. pp. 207-9 for the effect of Newtonian science on revealing 'the secret of the world or the truth of nature' (p. 208).

¹¹⁸ *The Autobiography and Memoirs of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, ed. Aldous Huxley (London: Peter Davis, 1926), I, 269. And there is Blake's prayer, 'May God keep us / From Single vision and Newton's sleep!' (Letter to Thomas Butts, Nov 22, 1802; rpt. *Blake's Poetry and Designs*, ed. Mary Lynn Johnson and John E. Grant (London and New York: Norton, 1979), pp. 460-2 (p. 462).

¹¹⁹ In *Prometheus Unbound* (1820) 'a rainbow's arch stood on the sea' (I, 708) to suggest love and self-sacrifice, after storm and sea disasters, and, in its most degenerate form, flowers 'hide with thin and rainbow wings / The shape of Death' (II. iv. 62-3); in *Hellas* (1822), Hope is the 'iris of delight' (line 48). J. Hillis Miller, *The Linguistic Moment: From Wordsworth to Stevens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), remarks: 'Hardy's work is so inhabited by echoes of Shelley that it almost might be defined as, from beginning to end, a large-scale interpretation of Shelley, one of the best and strongest that we have' (p. 115). Moore, *The Descent of the Imagination*, offers 'a theoretically interested investigation of Hardy's relationship to British romanticism' (p. 1).

¹²⁰ W. Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793), 'Proverbs of Hell', line 34, in *The Complete Writings of William Blake, with Variant Readings*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966).

¹²¹ James Thomson, 'Spring', from *The Seasons* (1746 edn.), see lines 208-15.

¹²² *Ibid.* It is the 'sage-instructed eye' of M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 304, but Thomson's descriptors are certainly ironic given their "magical" connotations.

¹²³ Thomson, 'Spring'. In his poem 'To the Memory of Sir Isaac Newton', Thomson maintains that the rainbow is more poetic now that it has delivered its mystery to reason, basing this on the belief that Newton has looked upon absolute beauty, for 'How just, how beautiful the refractive law'. See esp. lines 96-124.

¹²⁴ Moore, *The Descent of the Imagination*, p. 23.

Hardy's hostility for the man who alludes to minds he himself respected exposes his cynical understanding of the price paid by the modern intellectual, and he mercilessly satirizes thought and thinker. Grammer Oliver's apprehensive account of the academic's 'oddest...rozums' (*W*, VI) amount to a comic confusion of Fichtean idealism and Spinozan philosophy: "Let me tell you that Everything is Nothing. There's only Me and the Not Me in the whole world." Yes, he's a man of strange meditations' (ib.).¹²⁵ Hardy probably came across the original idea in Carlyle's essay on the 'German Idealist', Novalis:

To a Transcendentalist, Matter has an existence, but only as a Phenomenon: were *we* not there, neither would it be there...[It] depends for its apparent qualities on *our* bodily and mental organs; having itself *no* intrinsic qualities; being, in the common sense of the word, Nothing.¹²⁶

And, appropriately enough, Carlyle uses the tree to illustrate his point:

The tree is green and hard, not of its own natural virtue, but simply because my eye and my hand...discern...such appearances...There is, in fact, says Fichte, no Tree; but only a Manifestation of Power from something which is *not I*...This...may be the foundation of...his far-famed *Ich* and *Nicht-Ich* (I and Not-I).¹²⁷

Hardy followed such topical speculations closely, especially the current interest in the nature of perception and the advances made on Berkeleyan philosophy which

soon broke down the barriers between the physical and the mental, and gradually merged the former in the latter. Matter and its qualities, hitherto accepted an independent realities, existing where no Mind perceived them, were now viewed as the creations of the Mind - their existence was limited to the state of the percipient.¹²⁸

Berkeley established the subjective nature of phenomena and implicated the presence of an informing Me besides the perceptions themselves; Hume absented this self and

¹²⁵ According to Bradley, the 'individual...contained both object and subject, both not-self and self...[T]he relation of the self to the not-self is theoretical and practical. In the first we have, generally, perception or intelligence; in the second we have desire and will' ('The Meanings of Self', in *Appearance and Reality*, Ch. IX, pp. 75-102 (pp. 88, 89)).

¹²⁶ Thomas Carlyle, 'Novalis', in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, ed. H.D. Traill, 5 vols (London: Chapman & Hall, 1899; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1969), II, 1-55 (pp. 24-5). See *LV*, I, '1867', entry 215.

¹²⁷ Ibid., II, 25. Emerson was also aware of this divide: 'Philosophically considered, the universe is composed of Nature and the Soul. Strictly speaking...all which Philosophy distinguishes as the NOT ME, that is, both nature and art, all other men and my own body, must be ranked under this name, NATURE', (*Nature: Addresses*, I, 4-5).

¹²⁸ G.H. Lewes, 'The Course of Modern Thought', p. 319. Hardy made extensive notes from this essay.

dissolved it into an accumulation of perceptive faculties lacking a central identity. Thus, each individual human psyche, reduced to a compilation of what it sees, is quantified by these perceptions and memories; for empiricists and idealists alike, it is cut off from actual contact with the external world, is locked in Hume's 'universe of imagination'. Hardy's response heightens the solipsistic agony of this perspective, and though he prioritized 'abstract imaginings' over 'optical effects', an underlying contradiction in his twin interest surfaces in the portrayal of Fitzpiers. His theory that 'Everything is Nothing' leans toward transcendentalism, but his practice simultaneously accommodates not only Berkeley's premise that things forming the material universe have no substance without a mind, but Spinoza's monistic doctrine or 'hideous hypothesis' regarding the mind in matter itself - 'that substance, in which he supposes both thought and matter to inhere'.¹²⁹

Hume's sceptical appraisal of those philosophers who 'pretend that we have an idea of the substance of our minds'¹³⁰ became a very real concern for Hardy. His literary treatment of philosophical transcendentalism and physiological enquiry calls upon the traditional figures of mirror and microscope respectively, and connects the two in the notional and actual possession of a Mind. Grace, visiting Fitzpiers on behalf of the current owner of the latter, sees him in a looking-glass, and, as Thesing argues, 'the lines between reality and fancy become hopelessly blurred as these two characters generate illusions built upon distorted perceptions they imaginatively create in the mirror'.¹³¹ Fitzpiers relates his experience:

'I did not see you directly, but reflected in the glass. I thought, what a lovely creature! The design is for once carried out. Nature has at last recovered her lost union with the Idea! My thoughts ran in that direction because I had been reading the work of a transcendental philosopher, and...[that] dose of Idealism... made me scarcely able to distinguish between reality and fantasy.'
(*W*, XVIII)

¹²⁹ David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature* (1739), ed. T.H. Green and T.H. Grose, 2 vols (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1874), I, 524.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 517. The search continued into the twentieth century, Hardy noting Bergson's view: 'That these two forms of existence, matter and consciousness, have indeed a common origin, seems to me probable' (*LN*, II, 2422; 'Bergson and Balfour', *Review of Reviews*, 44 (Nov 1911), 473-4).

¹³¹ William B. Thesing, "'The Question of Matrimonial Divergence': Distorting Mirrors and Windows in Hardy's *The Woodlanders*", *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 14 (1987), 44-52 (p. 48).

Despite his rainbow-iris formula, Fitzpiers is sufficiently 'enchanted' to 'fancy' that the Idea or Platonic mirror-image has found its 'objective substance' in Grace, thereby validating Spinoza's supposition that 'love is nothing else than pleasure accompanied by the idea of an external cause'.¹³² Paulin asks, 'is love meaningless, like art and action, because it's subjective?'¹³³ Hardy appears persuaded that it is indeed just 'a matter of mirrors'¹³⁴ as Fitzpiers reduces Woman (the 'external cause') to a reflection in the glass of Man's ideals. But there is an uncomfortable consciousness of something hidden behind the impressions and sensations fleeting across the mind-mirror: Kant's essential 'thing-in-itself' (*W*, XVI) which is overlooked at the expense of the projected images.

The 'dose of Idealism' Fitzpiers absorbs and spouts repeats Schelling's Nature-philosophy.¹³⁵ Its central tenet, the fall from infinite reality into a world of limited reality, motivates Edred to recover their 'lost union', his self-appointed task mirroring Hardy's own desire:

'Here I am...endeavouring to carry out simultaneously the study of physiology and transcendental philosophy, the material world and the ideal, so as to discover if possible a point of contact between them.' (*W*, XVIII)

According to Lewes, the problem of how Matter and Mind 'were brought into relation, each acting and reacting on the other, was dismissed as an "insoluble mystery" - or relegated to Metaphysics',¹³⁶ and this is precisely where Bradley's *Appearance and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay* was to take over in 1893. In a passage similar enough to Hardy's to warrant attention, he remarks, 'We have got this reality on one side and our appearances on the other, and we are naturally led to enquire about their connection. Are they related, the one to the other, or not?' This question opens up 'in effect every

¹³² Benedict Spinoza, *Ethics* (1677), trans. Andrew Boyle, rev. G.H.R. Parkinson (London: Dent, 1989), p. 94. Cp. Teufelsdröckh's explanation of love: 'I call it rather a discerning of the Infinite in the Finite, of the Idea made Real...But...as in common Madness, it is Fantasy that superadds itself to sight' (*SR*, II.V).

¹³³ Tom Paulin, *Thomas Hardy: The Poetry of Perception* (London: Macmillan, 1975), p. 182.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* According to Shelley's 'Epipsychidion' (1821), with which Hardy was familiar,

Love is like understanding, that grows bright,
Gazing on many truths; [and]

...from a thousand prisms and mirrors, fills

The Universe with glorious beams. (lines 162-3, 166-7)

¹³⁵ Though it was not as yet available to Hardy, Bradley's enquiry, 'Is there no positive task which is left to metaphysics, the accomplishment of which might be called a philosophy of Nature?', is worth consideration ('The Absolute and its Appearances', in *Appearance and Reality*, Ch. XXVI, pp. 455-510 (p. 497)). Bradley spends some time explaining what such a philosophy would involve (pp. 496-9): 'metaphysics in short can assign a meaning to perfection and progress' (p. 497).

¹³⁶ Lewes, 'The Course of Modern Thought', p. 318.

unsolved problem which vexed us before',¹³⁷ and along with Lewes, Bradley concurs that 'what is certain is that, in some way, these inseparables are joined...Our failure so far lies in...that we have not found the way in which appearances can belong to reality'.¹³⁸ Hardy's metaphysician-cum-'weird alchemist- surgeon' (*W*, VII), searching for the key of representation, finds a predicate in Pater's Leonardo 'poring over his crucibles, making experiments with colour, trying, by a strange variation of the alchemist's dream, to discover the secret' of 'the transmutation of ideas into images'.¹³⁹ And, as 'philosophy is the microscope of thought',¹⁴⁰ Leonardo scrutinizes Nature's 'microscopic sense of finish' through his 'observations and experiments'¹⁴¹ just as Fitzpiers's speculative oscillations necessitate the shift from psychical mirror-reflections to physiological microscope-sights.

'The real and natural state of an object is better discovered by a very sharp and piercing sight', explains Philonous to Hylas, and 'microscopes make the sight more penetrating' by allowing 'the nearest and exactest survey'.¹⁴² The 'Course of Modern Thought' promulgated by Hardy's exemplar of the 'analytical school...attempts to reduce Sensibility, in its subjective no less than its objective aspect, to molecular movement',¹⁴³ and the 'cellular tissue of some indescribable sort' which he shows Grace turns out to be 'a fragment of old John South's brain' (*W*, XVIII), a 'heap of strange materials' which 'smelt very strong of essence' (*LN*, '1867' *NB*, entry 111).¹⁴⁴ He is trying to factualize the process of life, and as the 'brain is dissected under Fitzpiers's microscope, so Nature has lost its soul to modern science'.¹⁴⁵

Grace's response, not of 'aversion' but 'wonder', belongs as much to Hardy as Fitzpiers's enterprise belongs to the age. George Eliot's equivalent, Doctor Lydgate, brings 'the very eye of research' to a scientific exploration of the biological foundation of consciousness, and his 'testing vision...into this pathological study'¹⁴⁶ is encouraged by

¹³⁷ Bradley, 'Things in Themselves', in *Appearance and Reality*, p. 129.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

¹³⁹ Pater, *The Renaissance*, pp. 107, 112.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 110. There is also present something of Newton's own rainbow-making, his offering of 'The Proof by Experiments' (*Opticks*, Bk I, Part I, Prop. II, pp. 26-63 (p. 26)).

¹⁴² George Berkeley, *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous* (1713), ed. Robert Merrilew Adams (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1979), p. 20.

¹⁴³ Lewes, 'The Course of Modern Thought', p. 318.

¹⁴⁴ Joseph Addison, *Spectator*, no. 275 in *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond (Oxford, 1965), II, 570-1.

¹⁴⁵ Jacobus, 'Tree and Machine', p. 119.

¹⁴⁶ Eliot, *Middlemarch*, Ch. XVI.

Bichat's hypothesis that there must be 'certain primary webs or tissues, out of which the various organs'¹⁴⁷ are compacted. Whereas Bichat did not look beyond these tissues as ultimate facts, Lydgate, 'taking up the threads of investigation', wants to find 'the primitive tissue' spun from 'the raw cocoon'.¹⁴⁸ For his part, Fitzpiers continues the work of Lewes and Clifford. Modern physiology

began to disclose that all mental processes were (mathematically speaking) functions of physical processes, i.e., - varying with the bodily states; and this was declared enough to banish for ever the conception of a Soul. (CL, I, 95; 1877; LN, I, 899)¹⁴⁹

Lewes appreciated the conjectural aspect of the investigation, and though he sensed that 'point of contact' was unable to identify it: 'My world may be my picture of it; *your* world may be your picture of it; but there is something common to both which is more than either.'¹⁵⁰ The search was on for what Clifford termed 'mind-stuff' two years later:

The reality...which underlies what we call matter [i.e. phenomena] I shall call *mind-stuff*...A moving molecule of inorganic matter does not possess mind or consciousness, but it possesses a small piece of mind-stuff...and, when the matter takes the complex form of a living human brain, the corresponding mind stuff takes the form of human consciousness. (LN, II, 2090)¹⁵¹

Mallock defines Clifford as Hardy does Fitzpiers, a scientist working not only with 'the structure of the nervous system, but with object and subject, the Me and the Not Me'.¹⁵² And five years after the publication of *The Woodlanders*, Hardy confessed his failure:

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., Ch. XV.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ G.H. Lewes, 'The Course of Modern Thought', p. 325. Lewes's essay discusses two 'increasingly divergent lines' of modern philosophy: the Idealism of Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Kant is juxtaposed with 'the Theoretic Conception of scientific speculation' (pp. 318-9). Lewes's note regarding the exclusion of the Soul from the perceiving process anticipates Mallock's interpretation of Clifford's scientific speculations regarding human consciousness. Hardy read W.H. Mallock's 'The Late Professor Clifford's Essays', *Edinburgh Review*, CLI (April 1880), 474-511, a review of Clifford's *Lectures and Essays*, ed. Leslie Stephen and Frederick Pollock (1879). Mallock explains that 'Clifford saw that it was needful to maintain science as something more than the analysis of feelings of the individual. The progress of philosophy in this respect, Clifford said, began with Berkeley, "who established...the subjective character of the world of phenomena: that this world I perceive is my perceptions, and nothing more". But besides these perceptions, said Berkeley, there is also a spirit, a *me* that perceives them. And, "to get rid," says Clifford, "of this imaginary soul or substance was the work of Hume" (LN, I, 1215). See E. Jay, "'The Letter Killeth": Thomas Hardy's Response to W.K. Clifford's Theory of the Transference of "Mind-Stuff"', *Journal for the Critical Study of Religion and Ethics Society*, 2:1 (1997), 35ff.

¹⁵⁰ G.H. Lewes, 'The Course of Modern Thought', p. 321.

¹⁵¹ W.K. Clifford, 'On the Nature of Things-in-Themselves', in *Lectures and Essays*, ed. Leslie Stephen and Frederick Pollock (London, 1879), II, 85. See the extract cited in Bjork's 1974 edition of *The Literary Notes*, (Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1974), I, 1215n. By 1893 the answer was still not forthcoming, as Bradley, in a passage similar to Lewes, testifies: 'Each is a state of something else, which is never more than a state - and the *something escapes us*' ('Nature', in *Appearance and Reality*, Ch. XXII, pp. 261-94 (p. 264)). Even so, Bradley's own interrogation of the "matter" of essence/soul/consciousness fails to develop Clifford's any further: 'Can we say that bare soul ever acts upon body, and can soul exist at all without matter, and if so, in what sense? In our experience assuredly bare soul is not found. Its existence there, and its action, are inseparable from matter' ('Body and Soul', in *Appearance and Reality*, Ch. XXIII, pp. 295-358 (p. 240)).

¹⁵² Mallock, 'The Late Professor Clifford's Essays', p. 485.

With Spinoza, & the late W.K. Clifford, you may call all matter mind-stuff (a very attractive idea this, to me) but you cannot find the link (at least I can't) of one form of consciousness with another. (*CL*, I, 262; 1892)¹⁵³

Perhaps the solution is already before our eyes: 'Matter is a mental picture in which mind-stuff is the thing represented'.¹⁵⁴

Though Fitzpiers endures as the physical 'point of contact' between the disciplines, Felice cannot withstand the agony of being the mental conduit. Personifying modern subjectivism, she exhales the age's 'melancholy...sorrow and sickness' (*W*, XXVI, XXVII), and her perceptions are filtered through a grey 'cloud of misery' (*W*, XXVII) which condenses as the Hintocks' vapours. Fitzpiers's analogy of the human body and Leyden jar is focal; the emotional charge must needs be earthed:¹⁵⁵

'Hintock House has the curious effect of bottling up the emotions till one can no longer hold them; I am often obliged to fly away and discharge my sentiments somewhere.' (*W*, XXVI)¹⁵⁶

South discharges his life current via the elm and is killed once his conductor is felled; Felice, denied an outside agent, is left incapable of participating in any sort of objective reality, and her obsessive introjection induces a fatal, depressive hyperaesthesia:

'Sorrow and bitterness in the sky, and floods of agonized tears beating against the panes. I lay awake last night, and I could hear the scrape of snails creeping up the window glass; it was so sad!' (*W*, XXVII)¹⁵⁷

What started as energy experienced as a bodily sensation evolves into a series of mental patterns and symbolic images, which, once projected, assume physical manifestation. Haunted by herself, she watches 'her soul...being slowly invaded by a delirium' until she becomes 'an animated impulse only, a passion incarnate' (*W*, XXXII).

¹⁵³ Hardy parenthetically alludes to 'Clifford's "Mind-stuff"' when noting the following: 'Consciousness in Nature. Schelling, in the *Philosophy of Nature* writings...supplements the Fichtean Ego...by showing that the whole of Nature may be regarded as an embodiment of a process by which Spirit tends to rise to a consciousness of itself' (*LN*, II, 2049; 'Schelling', *Chambers's Encyclopaedia* (London and Edinburgh, 1892), IX, 205).

¹⁵⁴ See the extract cited in Bjork's 1974 edn. of *The Literary Notes*, I, 1215n.

¹⁵⁵ Miss Aldclyffe experiences Cytherea's presence as a painful current of emotion: 'The maiden's mere touch seemed to discharge the pent-up regret of the lady as if she had been made of electricity' (*DR*, 5.3). At the end of Hardy's career, Pierston's 'fancy' is inspired 'owing to the highly charged electric condition in which he had arrived by reason of his isolation' (*WB*, 2.1). See also Shelley's 'Epipsychidion' (1821) in which Emily's touch was as electric poison' (line 259).

¹⁵⁶ See Robert Kiely, 'The Menace of Solitude: The Politics and Aesthetics of Exclusion in *The Woodlanders*', in *The Sense of Sex: Feminist Perspectives on Hardy*, ed. Margaret Higonnet (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 188-202.

¹⁵⁷ Cp. Keats's letter to Sir Joshua Reynolds: 'We are here still envelopped in clouds - I lay awake last night listening to the Rain, with a sense of being drowned and rotted like a grain of wheat...The heavens rain down their unwelcomeness' (April 27, 1818; rpt. *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. Maurice Buxton Forman (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 4th edn., 1952), pp. 135-8 (p. 136).

Evolutionist precepts offered Hardy a scientific basis for this idea. For Darwin, Felice is one of those 'organisms, considered high in the scale of Nature',¹⁵⁸ which out-evolves its environment; for Spencer, 'the more highly developed the organism becomes, the stronger grows the contrast between its activity and the inertness of the subjects amidst which it moves',¹⁵⁹ for Huxley, 'subtle refinement of emotion' is 'fatally attended by a proportional enlargement of the capacity for suffering'.¹⁶⁰ The discrepancy between Tree and Machine is too pronounced, and in 1881 Hardy came to the following conclusion:

After infinite trying to reconcile a scientific view of life with the emotional and spiritual, so that they may not be interdestructive, I have come to the following: ...it would have been better never to have begun doing than to have *over done*... (on the emotional side)...The emotions have no place in a world of defect. (*EL*, p. 192; May 1881)

Emotions are 'a blunder of overdoing' (ib.), and though for Spencer human evolution presupposed 'higher nervous development and greater expenditure in nervous actions',¹⁶¹ his positivism permitted him to see in this contingency 'an increasing amount of happiness'¹⁶² that was denied to Hardy. He is conscious only that aspirations nurtured by environments insufficient to sustain them are forever antagonized by the defective clankings of the cosmic Machine, and that such disparity promotes the fatal dissociation from the environment and from the self.

Grace, located at the point of the novel's growth, personalizes the dislocating exigencies of this modern confusion. As an 'impressionable creature, who combined modern nerves with primitive feelings' (*W*, XL), she is abandoned 'mid-air between two storeys' (*W*, XXX). Though Hintock born, an acquired 'intellectual light and culture far beyond those of other natives of the village' has reconfigured her innate perception of things, yet ultimately, as with Clym, the old, cultural symbols reassert themselves. The remodification of her 'advanced...point of survey' (*W*, VI) and 'foreignness of view' (*W*,

¹⁵⁸ Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, Ch. X.

¹⁵⁹ Spencer, *Principles of Biology*, 2 vols (London: Williams & Norgate, 1864), II, 149.

¹⁶⁰ T.H. Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays, Collected Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1893-4), IX, 55.

¹⁶¹ Spencer, *Principles of Biology*, II, 502.

¹⁶² Ibid., II, 354. According to Hardy's translation of Alfred Fouille's *Les Transformations Futures de L'Idée Morale.- Eléments Scientifiques de la Moralité, Revue des Deux Mondes*, 89 (Oct 15, 1888), pp. 873-6 (see *LN*, I, 1644), 'the increase of intelligence & sensibility by civilization, if it does not evidently tend to the increase of unhappiness imagined by Rousseau & by M. de Hartmann, does not more evidently tend to that increase of felicity that...the Saint-Simons the Fouriers...promise us'.

XV) begins immediately she accepts Giles's worth, continues when she asserts, "'I am what I feel'" (*W*, XXX), and concludes with the emptying of her 'perturbed mind' during the storm. The storm may be 'no opaque body, but only an invisible colourless thing' (*W*, XLI), yet its incipient violence recoils on its creator who is as masochistic as her environment:

The assailant was a spectre which could be felt but not seen...[S]he had never been so entirely alone in spirit as she was now. She seemed almost to be apart from herself - a vacuous duplicate only. The recent self of physical animation and clear intentions was not there. (*W*, XLI)¹⁶³

Though 'elastic-nerved' (*W*, XXXVIII), this fundamental conflict undermines, annihilates, any vestiges of mental, nervous or emotional stability, and she becomes a visible essence, 'a frail phantom of her former self' (*ib.*).¹⁶⁴

Grace's self-fracturing prefaces a potentially more devastating rupture: Giles's death severs more than his physical tie to the world; it heralds the irreparable damage of the sympathetic view of man and nature, and the threnodic tones of *Balder Dead* resurface as Arnold and Hardy blame the modern world for Nature's failure to recuperate. Giles's passing uproots Carlyle's 'Tree of Existence' and the woods act like silent mourners at their own funeral: 'The whole world seemed to be a house of death, pervaded by loss to its utmost length and breadth. Winterborne was gone, and the copses seemed to show the want of him' (*W*, XLIII). In the parallel moment in *Balder Dead*, the wood is 'left uncomforted' (*BD*, III. 122) by the loss of its *genius loci*, and Hela's command, 'Show me through all the world the signs of grief!' (*BD*, II, 234), is answered by Nature's relentless and futile grieving:

After an hour a dripping-sound is heard
In all the forests...
Of all things weeping to bring Balder back. (*BD*, III, 310-11, 318)

¹⁶³ This passage is a striking anticipation of R.D. Laing's *The Divided Self* (1960) and *The Self and Others* (1961). In the former, Laing defines the varieties of 'ontological insecurity' underpinning schizophrenia: 'the individual may come to feel he is merely a vacuum' (Ch. 4); in the latter, the condition is seen as 'that form of self-division which involves a split of the person's being into a disembodied mind and a de-animate body' (Ch. 3). This could just as equally be applied to that crucial passage toward the end of *TD*.

¹⁶⁴ For a full account of Grace's condition, see Rosemary Sumner, *Thomas Hardy: Psychological Novelist* (London: Macmillan, 1981), pp. 82-92.

The requiem for the spirit which has merged with a rain-soaked woodland is empty and unrewarded, and Giles's proleptic climbing of the Tree comes to fruition as he turns for ever, like Balder, to 'the interior gloom' (*BD*, III, 553) of Shadows and 'feeble shades' (*BD*, II, 181-2).

Only now there is no Tree to climb, and Nature is pierced by 'a pair of jaundiced eyes' which seek and find what they bear: defect, struggle and gloom. And with the informing Spirit gone, it is left to Grace, that curious hybrid, to articulate the relative merits of 'subtle psychological intercourse' (*W*, XXIII) and 'intelligent intercourse with Nature' (*W*, XLIV). Only the latter appreciates the beauty in the everyday yet 'wondrous world of sap' (*ib.*). Discoloured by neither Darwin's eye for inconsistencies and pain, nor Spencer's insight into dissolution, the untrammelled 'clear gaze', the equivalent of Emerson's 'transparent eyeball',¹⁶⁵ sees something which surpasses the 'simply natural':

[Giles and Marty] had been possessed of [the wood's] finer mysteries as of commonplace knowledge; had been able to read its hieroglyphs as ordinary writing;...together they had...mentally collected the remoter signs and symbols which seen in few were of runic obscurity, but all together made an alphabet. (*W*, XLIV)¹⁶⁶

The Emersonian premise that 'a life in harmony with nature...will purge the eyes to understand the text'¹⁶⁷ is corroborated, but Hardy may have been leaning as much on Mozley's 'Nature' (1876), though he did not record the following until 1898: 'Language is everywhere half sign; its hieroglyphics, the dumb modes of expression' are fragments signifying 'that reality which just comes to the surface for a moment' (*LN*, II, 1966).¹⁶⁸ This means of expression substitutes symbols for absent 'Facts', themselves 'engraved Hierograms, for which the fewest have the key' (*SR*, II.X).¹⁶⁹ Carlyle's appeal - 'The answer lies around, written in all...harmonious Nature: but where is the cunning eye and

¹⁶⁵ Standing within the woods, 'I become a transparent eyeball...I see all' (*Nature: Addresses*, I, 10)

¹⁶⁶ During his life, Balder was wise, 'and many curious arts, / Postures of runes...he knew' (*BD*, I, 210-11). And Carlyle points out that 'Odin's Runes are a significant feature of him...Runes are the Scandinavian Alphabet' ('Lecture I: The Hero as Divinity', *On Heroes*, p. 24). In *W*, this inscribed, cryptic, silent language is also spoken. Moments before Giles's death, Grace hears 'low mutterings...gradually resolving themselves into varieties of one voice. It was an endless monologue, like that we sometimes hear from inanimate nature in deep secret places' (*W*, XLII). Cp. Wordsworth standing 'Beneath some rock, listening to notes that are / The ghostly language of the ancient earth' (*The Prelude*, Book I, 306-7).

¹⁶⁷ Emerson, *Nature: Addresses*, I, 35.

¹⁶⁸ J.B. Mozley, *Nature, University and other Sermons* (London, Oxford, and Cambridge, 1876), pp. 152-3.

¹⁶⁹ See J. Hillis Miller's discussion of symbols and hierograms in *SR*: "Hieroglyphical Truth in *Sartor Resartus*: Carlyle and the Language of the Parable", in *Victorian Subjects* (London and New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990), pp. 303-19.

ear to whom that God-written Apocalypse will yield articulate meaning?' (SR, I.VIII) - is satisfied by a woodlander's 'conning eye' which metaphorically equates, by perceptive reading, Life and Tree, Nature and Volume. And the text is forever in process: 'Like a Spiritual tree...[a book] stands from year to year, and from age to age...and yearly comes its new produce of leaves' (SR, II.VIII). Co-operatively, the cryptic signs form a legible tome, a voluminous 'Tree of Existence...[for] is not every leaf of it a biography, every fibre there an act or word? Its boughs are Histories.'¹⁷⁰

Sartor Resartus and *The Woodlanders* imagine the world as cipher, and so, according to Lewes, did Goethe for whom 'The book of Nature is after all the only one which has in every page important meanings' (LN, I, 114).¹⁷¹ The arcane text is simultaneously expressive and secretive, and nature's literary leaves, though the most indestructible and fundamental fact in the lives of the woodland community, possess an inscrutable supernaturalism. Hieroglyphically/symbolically true rather than literally authentic, *Sartor Resartus* formalizes this 'Natural Supernaturalism' (SR, III.VIII); it is no 'direct Camera-obscura Picture' of 'so-called fact' but a 'fantastic Adumbration' or 'shadowing-forth' (SR, II.X) of the truth just as Hardy's leaves invite scrutiny of a hidden agenda.¹⁷² To the Idealist, the writer of the apparent is the 'eye of imagination'; to the 'jaundiced eyes' of Darwinian excess, it is the 'Unfulfilled Intention'; but to a transcendentalist, the author of the wood's 'alphabet' is divine:

We speak of the Volume of Nature...whose Author and Writer is God.
To read it! Dost thou, dost man, so much as well know the Alphabet
thereof?...We shall not try thee. It is a Volume written in celestial
hieroglyphs. (SR, III.VIII)¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Carlyle, 'Lecture F, *On Heroes*, p. 19. Cp. Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), in *The Works of Edmund Burke*, 8 vols (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854), I, 49-81: 'The characters of nature are legible' (I, 50).

¹⁷¹ G.H. Lewes, *The Story of Goethe's Life* (London: Dent, 1873), p. 234.

¹⁷² Cp. Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (1850). Not only 'Is Nature like an open-book' (CXXXI, 144), but akin to the semi-revelatory power of language: 'For words, like Nature, half reveal / And half conceal the Soul within' (V, 3-4).

¹⁷³ The idea of nature as a divine volume was common among nineteenth-century German transcendentalists. In his *Carlyle and German Thought, 1819-1834* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), C.F. Harrold quotes Schiller: 'The laws of Nature are figures which a thinking being combines for the purpose of rendering itself intelligible to other thinking beings, the alphabet by means of which all spirits hold intercourse with the most perfect One' (pp. 106-7). Harrold also indicates a comparable point found in Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici*: 'Surely the Heathens knew better how to join and read these mystical letters than we Christians, who cast a more careless Eye on these common Hieroglyphicks' (p. 276). Hardy read Browne some time after 1886. See LN, I, '1867', entries 214-34. Study of the workings of nature was also a Romantic preoccupation.

Runes obscurely name the unnameable, for, as Carlyle wrote in his letters, 'the Highest cannot be spoken of in words...I dare not, and do not'.¹⁷⁴ Carlyle's reading presumes neither to comprehend nor to explain the Volume; neither does Hardy reveal 'the key', for the privileged understanding of Marty and Giles does not extend to mankind at large. His somewhat nihilistic philosophy, that 'the Scheme of Things is, indeed incomprehensible; and there I suppose we must leave it - perhaps for the best. Knowledge might be terrible' (*LY*, p. 218; Dec 1920),¹⁷⁵ anticipates Bradley's doctrine of incomprehensibility in which 'Nature is the phenomenal relation of the unknown to the unknown',¹⁷⁶ and the general readers of *The Woodland(er)s* stand bewildered 'in thought, like children in the presence of the incomprehensible' (*W*, XXXVIII).¹⁷⁷ In part, Hardy falls back on our stupidity in the face of the unfathomable to mitigate his literary and speculative shortcomings, pointing out the unlikelihood

that imaginative writings extending over forty years would exhibit a coherent scientific theory of the universe...of that universe which Spencer owns to the 'paralyzing thought' that possibly there exists no comprehension of it anywhere. (*GP*, pp. 48-9)¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ *The Collected Letters of Thomas Carlyle and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, ed. Charles Richard Saunders et al., 24 vols (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1970-1995), VIII, 136. Coleridge expresses similar sentiments: 'Should any one interrogate [Nature], how she works...she will reply, it behoves thee not to disquiet me with interrogatives, but to understand in silence even as I am silent, and work without Words' (*Biographia Literaria*, VII (i), 166).

¹⁷⁵ George Eliot seemed to hold a similar reservation: 'Of scientific truth, is it not conceivable that some facts as to the tendency of things affecting the final destination of the race might be more hurtful when they had entered into the human consciousness than they would have been if they had remained purely external in their activity? (Felix qui Non Potuit, in *Essays and Leaves from a Notebook* (London: Blackwood & Sons, 1884), p. 378). This horror in the face of knowing too much seems to stand in complete contrast to Keats's positive sentiments: 'An extensive knowledge is needful to thinking people - it takes away the heat and fever; and helps, by widening speculation, to ease the Burden of the Mystery' (May 3, 1818; in *The Letters of John Keats*, pp. 138-44 (p.139)). Whereas the Romantic envisages the procuring of knowledge as a means of dispelling 'the heat and fever', the Victorians, realizing the full potential of this contingency, demonstrate that knowledge engenders the 'fever' and exacerbates 'the Burden of the Mystery'. Yet Keats does appreciate that feeling the same as the author of such thoughts is necessary to a full understanding of them; then his beliefs anticipate his successors, even at a linguistic level: 'Until we are sick, we understand not; in fine, as Byron says, "Knowledge is Sorrow"; and I go on to say that "Sorrow is wisdom" - and further for aught we can know for certainty "Wisdom is folly"...' (ib., p. 141).

¹⁷⁶ Bradley, 'Nature', in *Appearance and Reality*, p. 264.

¹⁷⁷ See Timothy Hands, 'A Bewildered Child and his Conjurors': Hardy and the Ideas of His Time', in *New Perspectives on Thomas Hardy*, ed. Charles Pettit (London: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 137-155. Cp. 'the difference between children who grow up in solitary country places and those who grow up in towns - the former being imaginative, dreamy, and credulous of vague mysteries; giving as the reason that "The Unknown comes within so short a radius from themselves by comparison with the city-bred"' (*EL*, p. 265; Aug 1887).

¹⁷⁸ Used from Hardy's note of 1904: "'The paralyzing thought - what if, of all that is thus incomprehensible to us, [the Universe] there exists no comprehension anywhere?"' (*LN*, II, 2268; Herbert Spencer, *An Autobiography* (London, 1904), II, 470). As previously suggested, Hardy may have had Spencer's 'Progress: Its Law and Cause' in mind, the relevant sections of which demand citation here. Hence, despite the intellectual march of mind exercised by science, 'it only becomes more manifest that the unknown quantity can never be found' (Spencer, 'Progress: The Law and Its Cause', p. 484). For Spencer, the sincere man of science [Fitzpiers is the "insincere" antithesis]...becomes by each new inquiry more profoundly convinced that the Universe is an insoluble problem...Inward and outward things he thus discovers to be alike inscrutable in their ultimate genesis and nature...[H]is investigations eventually bring him face to face with the unknowable...He alone truly sees that absolute knowledge is impossible. He alone knows that under all things there lies an impenetrable mystery' (Spencer's emphasis; p. 485). Bradley holds that the 'popular', and 'even plausible view', is that doctrine which 'does not teach that our knowledge of reality is imperfect; it asserts that it does not exist, and that we have no knowledge at all, however imperfect' ('Things in Themselves', in *Appearance and Reality*, p. 128). Moreover, in a footnote, Bradley, denying irreverence, claims that 'Mr Spencer's attitude towards his Unknowable strikes me as a pleasantry, the point of which lies in its unconsciousness. It seems a proposal to take something for God simply because we do not know what the devil it can be. But I am far from attributing to Mr Spencer any one consistent view' (p. 128, n. 1). Finally, Bradley contends, 'the assertion of a reality falling outside knowledge, is quite nonsensical' (p. 131).

The Woodland(ers) yields to the supreme Unknowability of existence while appreciating that pursuit of knowledge motivates mankind. Lawrence's 'Study' clarifies this paradox: 'it seems as if the great aim and purpose in human life were to bring all life into the human consciousness',¹⁷⁹ but given 'the terrific action of unfathomed nature... uncomprehended and incomprehensible...surpassing human consciousness',¹⁸⁰ it can never happen. Thus Hardy looked to Spencer because he felt Carlyle's 'natural supernaturalism' was outmoded and incompatible with the 'analytic school's' scientific, not divine, conception of the universe. Social progress and the death of God had caused chaos. Antagonistic forces were at work, for though Hardy favours the intuitive sagacity of Giles and Marty, he is anxious that, at root, Nature's Volume is a fragmented text imparting a message of disunity and decay. In this respect, *The Woodlanders* fulfils the nightmare prophecy of *Sartor Resartus* by depicting that time when the Divine Volume is delivered into the hands of 'Institutes, and Academies of Science' to determine that pattern which decodes the indecipherable: 'the whole secret will in this manner one day evolve itself' (SR, III. VIII).¹⁸¹

But the text which divulges the 'finer mysteries' to Giles and Marty is also Emersonian. Hardy, reading 'Nature' (1836) in 1885,¹⁸² was no doubt attracted to the 'philosophy of insight', the belief that 'Nature is the incarnation of thought, and turns to thought again. The world is the mind precipitated'.¹⁸³ Like Carlyle and Hardy, Emerson

¹⁷⁹ D.H. Lawrence, 'Study of Thomas Hardy', in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence*, 2 vols, ed. E.D. McDonald (London: Heinemann, 1963), I, pp. 398-516 (pp. 430-1). Though written between 1914 and 1915, 'The Study' was not published until 1936. Cp. Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. George Eliot (1854; London and New York: Harper & Row, 1957): 'Scientific enthusiasm - is it not the most glorious triumph of intellect over thee? The desire of knowledge - is it not a simply irresistible, and all-conquering power?' (Ch. I: 1, p. 4).

¹⁸⁰ Cp. Arnold's allusion to 'life's incognisable sea' in 'Human Life' (1852), line 8. There are numerous studies comparing Hardy and Lawrence. See, for instance, Mark Kinkead-Weekes, 'Lawrence on Hardy', in *Thomas Hardy After Fifty Years*, ed. Lance St John Butler (London: Macmillan, 1977), pp. 91-103; Richard D. Beards, 'D.H. Lawrence and the "Study of Thomas Hardy", his Victorian Predecessor', *D.H. Lawrence Review*, 2 (1979), 210-29; Peter J. Casagrande, "'Now it Remains": Hardy and D.H. Lawrence', in *Hardy's Influence on the Modern Novel* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 32-61; see H.M. Dalecki, *The Forked Flame: A Study of D.H. Lawrence* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), Ch. I, for an explication of Lawrence's system in the 'Study'; Robert Langbaum, 'Hardy and Lawrence', in *Thomas Hardy in Our Time* (London: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 1-26.

¹⁸¹ Carlyle refers to Literature as 'an "apocalypse of Nature"', a revealing of the "open secret" ('Lecture V: The Hero as Man of Letters', *On Heroes*, pp. 133-67 (p. 141)), a phrase which also occurs in a letter to Emerson in 1837: 'It is the true Apocalypse this when the "Open Secret" becomes revealed to man' (*The Collected Letters of Thomas Carlyle and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, IX, 139). In 'Lecture III: The Hero as Poet', "Prophet and Poet...have penetrated...into the sacred mystery of the Universe; what Goethe calls "the open secret!"' (p. 69).

¹⁸² In 1882 Hardy made notes from a contemporary article comparing Emerson and Carlyle (who became life-long friends) (*LN*, I, 1274-7; *Spectator*, 60 (May 1882), p. 591). See also A. Abbott Ikle, *Puritan Temper and Transcendental Faith: Carlyle's Literary Vision* (Cleveland: Ohio State University Press, 1972), pp. 209-13, who considers stylistic and conceptual similarities between *Sartor Resartus* and 'Nature'; Kenneth Marc Harris, *Carlyle and Emerson: Their Long Debate* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978). Matthew Arnold said, 'Emerson's *Essays* are, I think, the most important work done in prose. His work is even more important than Carlyle's' ('Discourses in America' (1885), in *The Complete Works of Matthew Arnold*, ed. R.H. Super, 11 vols (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960-77), X, 182).

¹⁸³ Emerson, 'Nature', *Essays: Second Series*, in *Works*, III, 169-96 (p. 196).

also imagines nature as encyclopaedia, world as word, yet, despite certain similarities, two major inconsistencies arise; 'though difference between landscape and landscape is small...there is difference in the beholders'.¹⁸⁴ First is the deviation over the human/nature partnership. For Hardy, Tree and Man may embody Truth, but it can never be known; *The Woodlanders* holds an inscrutable text among its leaves. But for Emerson, all woodland is 'an open book', a personalized 'hieroglyphic' which 'shall answer the endless inquiring of the intellect'.¹⁸⁵

We have no questions to ask which are unanswerable. We must trust the perfection of the creation so far as to believe that whatever curiosity the order of things had awakened in our minds, the order of things can satisfy. Every man's condition is a solution in hieroglyphic to those enquiries he would put.¹⁸⁶

Secondly, Emerson speaks with rapture not only of the perspective - 'the stems of pines ...and oaks, almost gleam like iron on the excited eye'¹⁸⁷ - but of an essential harmony: 'the greatest delight which the...woods minister is the suggestion of an occult relation between man and the vegetable'.¹⁸⁸ He sees the woods as vital in their 'perpetual youth' and joyous in their 'perennial festival',¹⁸⁹ and Hardy, reading these lyrical affirmations, must have noticed only the disparity between their conclusions. Denied Emerson's 'transparent eyeball', Hardy sees not Mother Nature's bright youthfulness but the Hag's decrepit deformity; entering the mythical sanctum of 'sylvan peace', the only 'occult relation'¹⁹⁰ is one of mutual butchery. The Wordsworthian apostrophe, 'Let Nature be your Teacher', no longer holds, and 'barren leaves',¹⁹¹ no longer the preserve of the conventional text, are reassigned to the woodland.

The Tree has fallen and its readers follow. Jacobus argues that Marty's devotion to Giles's memory 'partially heals the breach between Nature and Imagination',¹⁹² but no

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., III, 176.

¹⁸⁵ Emerson, *Nature: Addresses*, I, 35, 75.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., I, 3-4.

¹⁸⁷ 'Nature', III, 170. Note the entirely different affective connotations of 'iron' here.

¹⁸⁸ *Nature: Addresses*, I, 10.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., I, 9.

¹⁹⁰ The verb 'to occult' means to hide or cut off from view, and several times there is a sudden eclipse, as it were, an abrupt shutting off of the vision. In 'Afterwards' (CP, 511), Hardy expresses the interruption of the perceptual sequence by 'an eyelid's soundless blink'; the sight is temporarily closed off in a moment of unvision. There is also, of course, the magical inference of the word, discussed below.

¹⁹¹ Wordsworth, 'The Tables Turned' (1798), lines 26, 29, the response to 'Expostulation and Reply' (1798).

¹⁹² Jacobus, 'Tree and Machine', pp. 132-3. See also Brandon B. Bennett's 'Hardy's Noble Melancholics', *Novel*, 27:1 (1993), 24-39,

matter how intense her mourning¹⁹³ it cannot re-establish that bond. It is extinct, consigned to the past:

They knew by a glance at a trunk if its heart were sound...The artifices of the seasons were seen by them from the conjuror's own point of view, and not from that of the spectator. (*W*, XLIV)¹⁹⁴

For them, the mythological Tree of Existence was a reality not a metaphysical concept, the scrutiny of its leaves a monistic activity, and seeing a way of seeing though. Carlyle's Divine Hero equates 'runes, and the miracles of "magic"',¹⁹⁵ and this magical interpretation of events offers another side to Emerson's 'occult relation', 'enchantments' and 'anciently reported spells of these places'.¹⁹⁶ So Hardy, championing the need for that 'more natural magic' as 'the old illusions begin to be penetrated' (*SF*, p. 135) by science, rails against the neutralization of nature and the rupture of that 'strange mystic, almost magic Diagram of the Universe' (*SR*, II.X) drawn by Teufelsdröckh.¹⁹⁷

Van Ghent claims that 'novelistic symbolism is magical strategy',¹⁹⁸ and though the trees are realistically observed by the couple, they integrate a symbolic or 'magical point of view'¹⁹⁹ which 'makes a system out of...magical interpretation'.²⁰⁰ In addition, the method comments on the narrator's perceptual authority. In one sense, Hardy is divorced from his creation (the preface separates 'the story' and 'the writer of these pages'), and what is seen 'from the conjuror's own point of view, not the spectator's', threatens the process of novel-writing and the associated stability. But the distinction is not total; in conjunction with the allusion to conjurors, the reference to 'children in the presence of the incomprehensible' reflects Hardy's own amazement: 'I have no philosophy...merely what I have often explained to be merely a heap of confused

which examines the interplay of memory, mourning obsession, pleasure and pain in the major characters in *W*, and explains the psychological processes by which Marty and Giles come to terms with loss.

¹⁹³ In her mourning over Giles, Marty resembles Nanna's elegiac wailing over Balder, Hardy apparently translating Nanna's lament, 'Sleep on; I watch thee, dear soul! / Neither do I neglect thee now, though dead' (*BD*, I. 292-3), into Marty's closing speech.

¹⁹⁴ Moreover, it is important to remember, as does Williams, 'The Hardy hero and his predicament', in *A Preface to Hardy*, pp. 87-100, that 'Giles and his fellow-workers are not merely figures in a landscape, they actually create that landscape' (p. 94, Williams's emphasis). Williams is possibly unaware that this simple assertion goes straight to the heart of Hardyian realism and perception.

¹⁹⁵ Carlyle, 'Lecture I: The Hero as Divinity', *On Heroes*, p. 24.

¹⁹⁶ Emerson, 'Nature', III, 170, 171.

¹⁹⁷ 'Mystic' derives 'from the act of shutting the eyes, that one may see the more, inwardly' (Pater, *The Renaissance*, p. 37). See *LN*, I, 735: 'Empiricism (objectivity) & Mysticism (subjectivity) - Scylla & Charybdis of Reason' (Auguste Comte, *System of Positive Polity*, trans. E.S. Beesley, R Congreve et al., 4 vols (London: Longman, Green & Co., 1875-77), III, 21).

¹⁹⁸ Dorothy Van Ghent, 'On Tess of the d'Urbervilles', in *The English Novel: Form and Function* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1953), pp. 195-209 (p. 208).

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 207.

impressions, like those of a bewildered child at a conjuring show' (*LY*, p. 218; Dec 1920).²⁰¹ Though various sights and oversights contribute to the plurality of the vision, there is implicated in 'the conjuror's own point of view' the existence of another text. The shifts in narrative perspective represent this vaporous, semi-visible narrative and reveal the susceptibility of the magical eye to the philosophical alternative.

Exploring the effect of this technique, Fisher says that 'the wilderness contains the "magic" and the trade which has cut a gap in its margins contains the "realism"'. The novel seeks to use the magic to explode the "realism".²⁰² Fisher is more hopeful than Hardy. Hardy acknowledges the potency of natural magic, certainly, but, resigned to its obsolescence, he is too depressed to consider, let alone instigate, a victorious explosion. More to the point, he places the source of its power, that elusive 'key' referred to by Carlyle and Pater, neither in the eye nor the imagination of the Natural Man or Woman; instead it is claimed, incontestably, by the awkward mongrel, the Romantic-Scientist. Fitzpiers is brother to Pater's Leonardo who 'seemed to [others] rather the sorcerer or the magician, possessed of curious secrets and a hidden knowledge, living in a world of which he alone possessed the key'.²⁰³ For both, 'philosophy' endows the practitioner with a 'double sight' and makes each a 'clairvoyant of occult gifts',²⁰⁴ and just as Leonardo 'explained the obscure light of the unilluminated part of the moon',²⁰⁵ so Fitzpiers masters the ultimate celestial conjuration. The 'enchanter's wand' (*SR*, I.IX) is the philosopher's 'key', and science explains away the trick of producing the rainbow and 'all those feats for the performance of which natural magic professed to have the key'.²⁰⁶ Imagination is redundant.

Though the beautiful face of nature exists for those bringing a 'clear' eye, the 'jaundiced' alternative sees a vision reminiscent of Shelley's 'A Sensitive Plant' (1820). Just as the woodland weeps a dirge for Balder and Giles, so the garden ululates the death of the Lady:

²⁰¹ It is almost certain that Hardy is indebted to Schopenhauer's *Studies in Pessimism* for the image of 'the bewildered child'. See Joanna Gibson, 'A Borrowing from Schopenhauer', *Notes and Queries*, 40:4 (Dec 1993), 492-3.

²⁰² Joe Fisher, *The Hidden Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1992), p. 136.

²⁰³ Pater, *The Renaissance*, p. 107.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 235, 107.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

The dark grass, and the flowers among the grass,
 Were bright with tears as the crowd did pass;
 From their sighs the wind caught a mournful tone,
 And sate in the pines, and gave groan for groan.²⁰⁷

As putrefication destroys the Garden of Love and Beauty²⁰⁸ with 'agarics, and fungi, with mildew and mould',²⁰⁹ so the 'wondrous world' of the Hintocks is eaten away by 'yellow fungi', 'rotting stumps' (*W*, XLII), and the 'mildews and mandrakes' infecting 'The Mother Mourns' (*CP*, 76). They are the ultimate, pure expression of Baudelaire's *fleurs du mal*; later, Lawrence's 'flowers of dissolution'.²¹⁰ But Shelley qualifies the nihilistic potential of this dream-vision turned nightmare; since 'nothing is, but all things seem, / And we the shadows of the dream',²¹¹ the beauty has not really disappeared; it is our perception, what we choose to see, that has altered:

'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed! not they.

For love, and beauty, and delight,
 There is no death nor change; their might
 Exceeds our organs, which endure
 No light, being themselves obscure.²¹²

Spinoza's creed that 'beauty & ugliness...are relative to men's organs & dispositions' and are 'nothing but human ways of imagining things' (*LN*, II, 2283)²¹³ is inherited by Emerson: 'the ruin or the blank that we see when we look at nature, is in our own eye. The axis of vision is not coincident with the axis of things'.²¹⁴ Hardy is unconvinced, but

²⁰⁷ Shelley, 'A Sensitive Plant', III, 13-16.

²⁰⁸ A symbolic world which, for both Hardy and Arnold, is deceptive:

...for the world, which seems
 To lie before us like a land of dreams,
 So various, so beautiful, so new,

Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light. ('Dover Beach' (1867), lines 30-3)

Both Hardy and Arnold feel able to do little more than assume the role of the spectator without illusion. Beneath their all-doubting eyes, illusion and reality are brought into uncompromising opposition: Hardy's 'darkling thrush' is born of the landscape of Arnold's 'darkling plain'. Philip V. Allingham, 'The Significance of "Darkling" in Hardy's "The Darkling Thrush"', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, VII: 1 (Feb 1991), 45-9, considers the adjective in the context of Arnold's poem, amongst others. See also Charles E. May, 'Hardy's "Darkling Thrush": The Nightingale Grown Old', *Victorian Poetry*, 11:1 (Spring 1973), 62-5; R.A. Burns, 'Imagery in Hardy's "Darkling Thrush"', *Concerning Poetry*, 10:1 (Spring 1977), 87-9.

²⁰⁹ Coleridge, 'A Sensitive Plant', III, 71, 57, 62-3.

²¹⁰ Baudelaire's *fleurs du mal*, a nihilistic concept (with Spenserian overtones), are refined by Hardy and inherited by Lawrence. Speaking of 'the flowering mystery of the death process' with Ursula, Birkin sees 'destructive creation' in 'universal dissolution'. From this, Ursula interprets that 'we are flowers of dissolution - fleurs du mal'. For Birkin, 'dissolution...is a progressive process - and it ends in universal nothing - the end of the world, if you like' (*Women in Love* (1921), Ch. XIV).

²¹¹ Shelley, 'A Sensitive Plant', III, 124-5.

²¹² *Ibid.*, III, 133-7. In 1914, Bradley comes to the same conclusion: "For love and beauty and delight", it is no matter where they have shown themselves, "there is no death nor change"; and this conclusion is true. These things do not die, since the Paradise in which they bloom is immortal. That Paradise...is here, it is everywhere where any finite being is lifted into that higher life which alone is waking reality' ('On my Real World', in *Essays on Truth and Reality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914), Ch. XVI, pp. 460-9 (p. 469)).

²¹³ G.E. Underhill, 'The Use and Abuse of Final Causes', *Mind*, XIII (April 1904), 223-6.

²¹⁴ Emerson, *Nature: Addresses*, I, 73, a tenet inconsistent with his perception of a 'radical correspondence between visible things and human thoughts' (I, 29).

would like to be persuaded. His theory may argue that the autonomy of the observed 'remains the same, with its sublimities, its beauties, its ugliness' (*PRF*, p. 114), but his practical anti-Romantic gesture suggests that the 'might' of external beauty does *not* exceed the transforming power of the jaundiced eye.

In 1832, Christopher North, purporting that 'we create nine-tenths at least of what appears to exist externally', enthused that those who study 'the living Book of Nature...behold in full the beauty and the sublimity, which their own immortal spirits create, reflected back on them who are its authors'.²¹⁵ The final decades of the century find Hardy's 'immortal spirits' recoiling destructively upon their source by reflecting an anti-aesthetic which throws everything under the jurisdiction of 'that quick, glittering empirical eye' (*W*, XIV), a devastating contingency for the creative mind. Given this gloomy climate, Hardy was understandably drawn to Sully's *Pessimism* (1877), its reference to Schelling voicing the dejection affiliated with modern speculations, especially as they affected man's stained vision of nature:

Nature has risen up against [man] in hostility and has, moreover, lost the initial stages of its perfection...This view of the world gives room for much pessimistic complaint, and Schelling speaks...of the sadness which cleaves to all finite life, of the deep indestructible melancholy of all life, and of the veil of depression...which is spread over the whole of nature.²¹⁶

By this time, Arnold and Ruskin had cast a cloudy 'veil of depression' over Tennyson's 'Nature, red in tooth and claw',²¹⁷ Darwin had finalized the divorce of man and God; Spencer had consigned the entire condition to oblivion. Hardy, synthesizing the growing despair permeating over half a century, externalizes the fear of going 'melancholy mad'

²¹⁵ Christopher North (John Wilson), 'Tennyson's Poems' (May 1832), in *Works of Professor Wilson*, ed. Ferrier (Edinburgh and London: Adam & Charles Black, 1856), VI, 109-10.

²¹⁶ James Sully, *Pessimism: A History and a Criticism* (London: Henry S. King, 1877), pp. 68-9. Sully's treatise acknowledged a mood that had been growing for a generation; but it was no more than a mood because few in England were prepared to be outright pessimists with all that it involved. Only a small number of writers, such as Sully and James Thomson, whose *The City of Dreadful Night* (1874) reflected the teaching of Leopardi, were prepared to accept the full Continental doctrine. See also Sully's description of Schelling's *Nachwachen*, which Hardy recorded in 1886, and is equally applicable to *The Woodlanders*: 'in a series of fantastic images which look like the product of a disordered brain the writer makes to pass before our eyes a number of typical scenes of human life, accompanying his panorama with the bitterest sarcasms on man & the world' (*LN*, I, 1369; Sully, *Pessimism*, p. 28).

²¹⁷ *In Memoriam* (1850), LVI. 15. See Ronald D. Morrison, 'Two Responses to Victorian Science: Tennyson and Hardy', *Kentucky Philological Review*, 7 (1992), 27-31.

(*W*, VI),²¹⁸ and the reality of existence is seen and created by eyes which, sick and sad, see only sickness and sadness.

The soul's 'iris-bow' lies untwined. Emerson sees that 'empirical science is apt to cloud the sight, and by the very knowledge of functions and processes to bereave the student...The savant becomes unpoetic', for only 'a dream will let us deeper into the secrets of nature than a hundred concerted experiments'.²¹⁹ Thomas Campbell's 'To the Rainbow', contemporary with Keats's *Lamia*, contributes to the indictment of Newton's *Opticks* and denies the poet's need of 'proud Philosophy' in approaching the reality of the iridescent arc:

Can all that optics teach, unfold
 Thy form to please me so,
 As when I dreamt of gems and gold
 Hid in thy radiant bow?

When Science from Creation's face
 Enchantment's veil withdraws,
 What lovely visions yield their place
 To cold material laws!

Nine years later, Poe's 'Sonnet - To Science' confronts, with even more ire, the 'dull realities' of Science 'Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes', preys 'upon the poet's heart', and negates the transcendental vision conferred by the poetic dream. Just as Keats's 'cold philosophy' has 'Empt[ified] the haunted air, and gnomed mine',²²⁰ so Poe's 'Vulture' has 'dragged Diana from her car' and 'from me / The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree'.²²¹ And as 'Science' continues to charm the 'secret from the latest moon',²²² so Empedocles's anguished cry, 'Look, the world tempts our eye, / And we know it all!', continues to ring.²²³ Hardy embodied the terrible power of this

²¹⁸ Jude repeats the phrase, 'I am melancholy mad', to the curate.

²¹⁹ Emerson, *Nature: Addresses*, I, 66-7.

²²⁰ Keats, *Lamia*, Part II, line 236.

²²¹ Edgar Allan Poe, *Everyman's Poetry* (London: Dent, 1996), pp. 17-18. Cp. D.H. Lawrence: 'The universe is dead for us... "Knowledge" has killed the sun, making it a ball of gas, with spots; "knowledge" has killed the moon, it is a dead little earth fretted with extinct craters and smallpox; the machine has killed the earth for us, making it a surface, more or less bumpy, that you travel over. How, out of all this, are we to get back the grand orbs of the soul's heavens, that fill us with unspeakable joy? How are we to get back Apollo, and Attis, Demeter, Persephone, and the halls of Dis?' ('A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*', in *Phoenix*, II, 487-515 (p. 511). Even so, despite Science's intellectual power, Spencer confronts its severe limits: 'After all that has been said, the ultimate mystery of things remains just as it was' ('Progress: its Law and Cause', p. 484).

²²² Tennyson, *In Memoriam* (1850), XXI, 18-20.

²²³ Arnold, 'Empedocles on Etna' (1852), I. ii. 317-8. Empedocles continues:

We map the starry sky,
 We mine the earthen ball,

We measure the sea-tides, we number the sea-sands. (I. ii. 319-21)

Only when 'our eyes are dimm'd' does the perceptual faculty bow before the Gods:
 True science if there is,

disillusionment in a representative 'pair of jaundiced eyes', the pupil of the 'analytic school' which views and creates the world in its own image. Reality depends 'upon a change happening in the humours of the eye' and 'in the *jaundice*, everyone knows that all things seem yellow',²²⁴ an aphorism adopted by Carlyle's Heroic Poet: "'the eye seeing in all things what it brought with it the faculty of seeing!'" To the mean eye all things are trivial, as certainly to the jaundiced they are yellow'.²²⁵ And the seventh Newtonian Axiom is severely indicted:

If the Eye be tinged with any colour (as in the Disease of the *Jaundice*) so as to tinge the Pictures in the bottom of the Eye with that Colour, then all Objects appear tinged with the same Colour.²²⁶

Science has not only obliterated Nature's magical, mythical essence, stolen its soul, and unwoven its mystery; it has also begun to dispossess the modern world of imagination. And though 'the Materialist and Spritualist controversy is a mere war of words'²²⁷ for Spencer, Hardy acknowledges and records the real effects produced by 'the struggle between the creative and the critical faculty [which] is forever going on' (*LN*, I, 1229).²²⁸

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It stays in your abodes!

Man's measures cannot mete the immeasurable All.' (I. ii. 336, 339-41)

²²⁴ Berkeley, *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*, p. 21; Berkeley's emphasis. 'Humours' must be taken as double-edged.

²²⁵ Carlyle, 'Lecture III: The Hero as Poet', *On Heroes*, p. 80. See also 'Count Cagliostro' (1833), *Essays*, III, 249-318 (p. 317). The common source for Hardy, Carlyle and Berkeley was probably Plotinus's first Ennead, Sixth Tractate, 'On Beauty': 'For one must come to the sight with a seeing power made akin and like to what is seen'. This is even more interesting given Gregor's comment that where *Jude the Obscure* ends *The Rainbow* begins (*The Great Web: The Form of Hardy's Major Fiction* (London: Faber & Faber, 1974), p. 233). In the first chapter of *The Rainbow*, Tom Brangwen, inebriated, trudges across Marsh Farm 'and looked at everything with a jaundiced eye' (I.II) born of disillusionment.

²²⁶ Newton, *Opticks*, Bk I, Part I, Axiom VII, pp. 14-17 (p. 15); Newton's emphasis. Hardy may also have been acquainted with the Dickensian version of this figure which, exploring the same concept, addresses what was to become the manner in which the experienced Hardy came to see the world. Oliver, feeling happy, sees the beauty of the natural world: 'Such is the influence which the conditions of our own thoughts exercises even over the appearance of external objects. Men who look on nature, and their fellow-men, and cry that all is dark and gloomy, are in the right; but the sombre colours are reflections from their own jaundiced eyes and hearts. The real hues are delicate, and need a clearer vision' (*Oliver Twist* (1838), ed. Kathleen Tillotson (London: Clarendon Press, 1966), Ch. 34). This is quite possibly the earliest Victorian call for the 'clear gaze' possessed by Giles and Marty.

²²⁷ Spencer, 'Progress: Its Law and Cause', p. 485.

²²⁸ In 1893 Bradley was still writing about the destruction of nature through scientific knowledge as if had not yet been realized. His comments provide a retrospective evaluation of what Hardy had creatively argued sixteen years earlier: 'Nature then, while unexplained, is still left in it sensuous splendour, while Nature, if explained, would be reduced to [a] paltry abstraction...If the genuine reality of Nature is bare primary qualities, then...in a word Nature will be dead...The Nature, studied by the observer and by the poet and painter, is in all its sensible and emotional fulness a very real Nature. It is in most respects more real than the strict object of physical science' ('The Absolute and its Appearances', in *Appearance and Reality*, Ch. XXVI, pp. 455-510 (pp. 490, 491, 495)).

VII

'THE EYE OF...AFFECTION':¹

EMOTIONAL MATTER AND FELT REALITY IN *TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES* (1891)

It was then that the ecstasy and the dream began, in which emotion was the matter of the universe, and matter but an adventitious intrusion. (TD, X)

*Die Welt wird Traum, der Traum wird Welt.*²

Take any case of perception...where this relation of object to subject is found as a fact...Surely in every case that contains a mass of feeling, if not also of other psychical existence.³

It is the soul that sees; the outward eyes
Present the object, but the mind describes...
Our feelings still upon our views attend,
And their own natures to the objects lend:
Sorrow and joy are in their influence sure,
Long as the passion reigns th' effects endure;
But love in minds his various changes makes,
And clothes each object with the change he takes;
His light and shade on every view he throws,
And on each object, what he feels, bestows.⁴

Tess of the d'Urbervilles, like the rest of the Hardy canon, does not provide 'the reality of existence but a reality of existence',⁵ one which invited an acrimonious contemporary response. Though Hutton praised 'the beauty and realism of the delineations of life on the large dairy-farm',⁶ the 'merciless methods of realism'⁷ as understood in France were blamed for Hardy's spoilation of 'the evanescent reality of Tess herself',⁸ and the longevity of this critical angle highlights the difficulty surrounding the question of Tess's 'verisimilitude'. For Milberg-Kaye:

¹ TD, XIV.

² Novalis's famous equation, 'The world becomes the dream, the dream becomes the world'. Quoted by Rene Wellek, *Confrontations: Studies in the Intellectual and Literary Relations between Germany, England and the United States during the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 16.

³ F.H. Bradley, 'The Meanings of Self', in *Appearance and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co.; New York: Macmillan, 1893), Ch. IX, pp. 75-102 (p. 90).

⁴ George Crabbe, 'The Lover's Journey' (1812), lines 1-2, 10-17. Varley Lang, 'Crabbe and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *Modern Language Notes*, LIII (May 1938), 369-70, suggests that Crabbe's poem, 'The Maid's Story', in which the central character becomes a fiery preacher and offers to wed the heroine, may have inspired Hardy to make Alec a zealot.

⁵ David Lodge, *The Language of Fiction* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2nd edn., 1984), p. 279.

⁶ R.H. Hutton, *Spectator* (Jan 23, 1892), 121-2; rpt. *Thomas Hardy: Critical Assessments*, ed. Graham Clarke, 4 vols (Sussex: Helm Information Ltd, 1993), I, 184-6 (I, 186). Hereafter cited as TH:CA. See Peter J. Casagrande, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles: Unorthodox Beauty* (New York: Twayne, 1992).

⁷ Anon., *Independent* (Feb 25, 1892); rpt. TH:CA, I, 197-200 (I, 199). See also Anon., *Review of Reviews* (Feb 1892); rpt. TH:CA, I, 191; and Richard le Gallienne, *Star* (Dec 23, 1892); rpt. TH:CA, I, 167-9: 'Study of French authors seems to be having a strong influence on Mr Hardy's work just lately' (I, 168).

⁸ Francis Adams, *Fortnightly Review* (July 1, 1892); rpt. TH:CA, I, 219-220 (I, 219).

Tess has something of a made-up quality about her. Hardy has created three or four different Tesses, depending on which part of the novel one is reading...She is incomplete, made up of bits and pieces.⁹

And she invokes James as one who could successfully produce a 'real' character. Claridge, too, discovers the work's flaws in Hardy's failure to create Tess as 'an ordered, coherent personality', and for a realistic fiction this is fatal.¹⁰

Such conclusions, though foregrounding the complexity of the novel's multiple perspectives, are guilty of imposing upon a non-realistic creation a Jamesian formulation to which Hardy had no intention of conforming.¹¹ As Bjork appreciates, the nature of Hardy's art 'is best considered in relation to [his] central critical beliefs, that is, the anti-realistic basis of his aesthetic principles',¹² and Hardy's affirmation of 1901 explicitly clarifies his position:

Realism - The modern English realist has confused the issue of the business; he thinks that if he is objectively 'actual', laboriously detailed in outside observation...he has exhausted the possibilities of his method. But the truer realism is subjective. It deals with emotions, with sensations half-realized and misinterpreted; it shows the mind of a man...not the external aspects. (LN, II, 2160)

Tess of the d'Urbervilles's preoccupation with emotions, with felt life, dissented from 'certain conventions which some people even yet respect',¹³ and stood in 'open challenge of that traditional pattern'.¹⁴ Black's positive response to Hardy's subversion, though atypical, was not isolated, and Hannigan, bypassing what offended the Grundyists, recognized the novel as marking 'a distinct epoch in English fiction...In this work a great stride is made',¹⁵ it had 'revolutionized English fiction'.¹⁶

Hardy's major achievement in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is the defiant emotional structure of its phenomenological argument. This is not to deny the affective dimension of earlier novels, but Hardy did not release its wider implications into his perceptual

⁹ Ruth Milberg-Kaye, *Thomas Hardy: Myths of Sexuality* (New York: John Jay Press, 1983), p. 7.

¹⁰ Laura Claridge, 'Tess: A Less than Pure Woman Ambiguously Presented', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 28:3 (Fall 1986), 324-38 (p. 326); rpt. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A New Casebook*, ed. Peter Widdowson (New York: St Martin's Press; Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), pp. 63-79.

¹¹ See J.T. Laird, 'Approaches to Fiction: Hardy and Henry James', *Thomas Hardy Annual: No. 2*, ed. Norman Page (London: Macmillan, 1984), 41-60.

¹² Bjork's intro. to vol. 1 of LN, p. xxiii.

¹³ Anon., *Athenaeum* (Jan 9, 1892); rpt. TH:CA, I, 176-8 (I, 178).

¹⁴ Clementina Black, *Illustrated London News*, C (Jan 9, 1892); rpt. TH:CA, I, 179-80 (I, 179).

¹⁵ D.F. Hannigan, *Westminster Review*, CXXXVIII (Dec 1892), 655-9; rpt. TH:CA, I, 223-6 (I, 225).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 226.

thesis until this time; *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is the culmination of a vision which had been evolving for nearly a quarter of a century. Never before had emotion functioned exclusively as the principal creative material, served as the criterion against which the intensity of existence was qualified and quantified.¹⁷ What gave *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* its 'unrivalled power'¹⁸ and made it 'the strongest English novel of many years',¹⁹ was what Hutton termed its regrettable preference for 'the pantheistic conception that impulse is the law of the universe'.²⁰ Too much was given over to feelings.

This is one way of saying that *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is a visualized emotion; it feels reality into being; it perceives that 'human actions are not ruled by reason at all in the last resort' (*LY*, p. 210; Feb 1920),²¹ for 'emotion is our final test of the values of things' (*LN*, II, 2356),²² and 'the subjective man makes his feelings the measure, the standard of what ought to be'.²³ The energizing 'eye of...affection' (*TD*, XIII) determines the work's ontological and psychological parameters so totally that 'Things' are 'described in terms of Feeling',²⁴ and only months before the novel's publication, Hardy argued that the 'science of fiction' involved writing 'a whole library...with instructions how to feel' and cultivating a sympathetic 'power of observation informed by a living heart' (*SF*, p. 138). *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, as such an imagistic history of emotional evolution, is the quintessential pathetic fallacy, or, as Andersen suggests, Hardy's method 'appears to be the pathetic fallacy driven to such an extreme that it is no longer a fallacy but an artistic integer',²⁵ a strategy which addresses an idealist's psychological analysis of reality where 'all physical facts are mental facts expressed in objective terms, and mental facts are physical facts expressed in subjective terms'.²⁶ Intended 'in the scenic parts to be representative simply, and in the contemplative to be oftener charged with impressions

¹⁷ It was certainly revolutionary in this respect alone, and it was not until 1914 that Bradley stated, without qualification, that 'I must start from what I find, now and here, in feeling and perception; I must from this basis construct what I call the real world of facts and events' (F.H. Bradley, 'On my Real World', in *Essays on Truth and Reality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914), Ch. XVI, pp. 460-9 (p. 466)).

¹⁸ Hutton, *TH:CA*, I, 186.

¹⁹ Anon., *Pall Mall Gazette* (Dec 31, 1891); rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 173-5 (I, 175).

²⁰ Hutton, *TH:CA*, I, 186.

²¹ See George Eliot: "'A Fine Excess": Feeling is energy', in *Essays and Leaves from a Notebook* (London: Blackwood & Sons, 1884), pp. 379-82).

²² 'Algernon Charles Swinburne', *Times Literary Supplement* (April 15, 1909), p. 141.

²³ Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. George Eliot (1854; London and New York: Harper & Row, 1957), Ch. XIV, p. 137.

²⁴ G.H. Lewes, 'The Course of Modern Thought', *Fortnightly Review*, XXI (1877), 317-27 (p. 325).

²⁵ Carol R. Andersen, 'Time, Space, and Perspective in Thomas Hardy', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 9 (1954), 192-208 (p. 203).

²⁶ Lewes, 'The Course of Modern Thought', p. 321; Lewes's emphases.

than convictions', *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* insists that subjectively-felt interpretations alone reveal 'the inner Necessity and truth'.²⁷

Concurring with Disraeli that 'a knowledge of man is a knowledge of their passions' (*LN*, I, 1118),²⁸ Hardy formulated an affective epistemology to describe our perceptual re-creation of phenomena, restore the primacy of the subjective and validate one 'Course of Modern Thought',

the fundamental fact that all our knowledge *springs from*, and is *limited by*, Feeling. It has shown that the universe represented in that knowledge can only be a picture of the system of things as these exist in relation to our Sensibility.²⁹

Hardy's initial experiment with 'poetical representations'³⁰ in 1871 concluded that 'emotions will attach themselves to scenes that are simultaneous - however foreign in essence these scenes may be' (*DR*, 1.3). At this time, Hardy understood feelings as having no objective manifestation despite our compunction to connect them with equivalent materials, and it was *eighteen* years before he pinpointed the potential of absolute figurative association:

In time one might get to regard every object, and every action, as composed, not of this or that material, this or that movement, but of the *qualities* of pleasure and pain in varying proportions. (*EL*, p. 285; Feb 1889)³¹

What was superficially 'attached' in 1871 had, by 1891, so saturated the perceptual process that 'moods' composed the essence of the perceived. It was a topical issue. Carlyle acknowledged the method's monistic promise: 'the soul gives unity to whatsoever it looks on with love...But what thousand other thoughts unite thereto, if the place has to ourselves been the arena of joyful or mournful experiences';³² Ruskin said that 'highest

²⁷ Preface to 5th edition of *TD*, 1892.

²⁸ Benjamin Disraeli, *The Young Duke*, Bradenham Edn. (London, 1927), II, 9.

²⁹ Lewes, 'The Course of Modern Thought', p. 319.

³⁰ Preface to 5th edition of *TD*.

³¹ A poet's perspective which can be compared with Wordsworth's: 'What then does the Poet? He considers man and the objects that surround him as acting and re-acting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure' ('Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*' (1805), in *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. Michael Mason (London and New York: Longman, 1992), pp. 55-87; Appendix, pp. 87-93 (p. 75).

³² Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus: The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh* (1832; London: Chapman & Hall, 1870), Bk. II. Ch. VI.

art' was a personal expression of reality based on the 'sensations of peculiar minds' (*LN*, I, 1381),³³ and even George Eliot declared that 'the secret of our emotions never lies in the bare objects but in its subtle relation to our own past: no wonder the secret escapes the unsympathetic observer'.³⁴ Zola's description of realistic literature as 'un coin de la création vu à travers un tempérament'³⁵ in 1866 was followed in 1870 by Spencer's identification of observation as fundamental to associationism: it is in seeing that 'we find the elements of feeling most intimately bound up with the elements of relation'.³⁶ Given the emotional-visual orientation of this climate, Hardy was attempting nothing ideologically original *per se*, but the affective eye of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* synthesizes objects and emotions so completely - it is not simply a matter of analogy or relation - that ontological matters can only be comprehended in terms of feeling. For imaginative prose literature, this was unprecedented.

In 1894 Johnson remarked that 'the worthiest, the most valuable, facts of life are the human emotions and the human passions'.³⁷ Passion is the watch-word; indeed, watching with passion is the ultimate creative activity, and Hardy's expectation that 'in time one might get to regard every object, and every action, as composed...of the qualities of pleasure and pain in varying proportions' (*EL*, p. 285), in conjunction with his belief that, 'in representations of the world, the passions ought to be proportioned as in the world itself' (*CEF*, p. 127), may constitute a backward glance at Lewes's 'Reasoned Realism'

which reconciles Common Sense with Speculative Logic, by showing that although the *truth* of things...is just what we perceive in them...yet their *reality* is this, and much more than this. *Things* are what they are felt to be; and what they are thought to be, when thoughts are symbols of the perception.³⁸

³³ Ruskin, *Works*, III, 133-8.

³⁴ George Eliot, *Adam Bede* (1859), ed. Stephen Gill (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), II, 17. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, in *The Poetical Works of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, ed. William Rossetti (London: Ellis and Elvey, 1891), uses a concrete object (a picture in 'The Portrait') to serve as a device by which the speaker's organizing consciousness links present and past (and sometimes the future) through emotional association. But, unlike Eliot and Hardy whose deployment of this poetic technique creates a sense of organic unity/continuity, Rossetti's use of the method gives rise instead to a feeling of separateness, a conflict between appearance and reality, an intimation of the illusiveness of the phenomenal world.

³⁵ Emile Zola, *Mes Haines* (1866), in *Emile Zola: Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. Henri Mitterand, 15 vols (Paris: Cercle du Livre Précieux, 1968), X, 15-187 (p. 38).

³⁶ Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Psychology*, 2 vols (1867; London: Williams & Norgate, 2nd edn., 1870), I, 169-70.

³⁷ Lionel Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy* (1894; rpt. London: The Bodley Head, 1923), p. 11.

³⁸ G.H. Lewes, 'The Course of Modern Thought', p. 321.

It certainly anticipates Bradley's dismissal of 'the assertion that pleasure and pain are essentially not capable of being objects',³⁹ for Hardy refuses to ignore 'the primary fact that Feeling is indissolubly interwoven with processes regarded as purely physical',⁴⁰ and his most explicit justification of Lewes describes how affection's definitive power emblematically unifies noumenal and phenomenal:

It was in that vale that her sorrow had taken shape, and she did not love it as formerly. Beauty to her, as to all who have felt, lay not in the thing, but in what the thing symbolized. (TD, XLIV)⁴¹

This may also acknowledge Bain's theory of 'associates with feeling', for 'the element of Feeling, or pleasure or pain, enters into alliance with...perceptions of outward things ...We are apt to feel an aversion to places where we have suffered deep injuries'.⁴² Filtering these (in)formative emotions, the mind precipitates a personalized landscape symbolizing an inexpressible mood.⁴³

³⁹ Bradley, 'The Meanings of Self', in *Appearance and Reality*, p. 93. Fearing obscurity, Bradley continues to clarify his meaning: 'What I mean is this: we are able in our internal mass of feeling to distinguish...a number of elements; and...to decide that our feelings contain beyond these an unexhausted margin...a margin which, in its general idea of margin, can be made an object, but which, in its particularity, cannot be' (ib.). Perhaps this also looks toward Woolf's recognition of the 'margin of the unexpressed' in Hardy.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 325.

⁴¹ The first clause can be taken literally, Tess's naming of her child possibly owing a debt to the fate suffered by the playful Highland girl of Wordsworth's 'Peter Bell', in *Wordsworth: Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 2nd edn., 1936; rpt. 1974):

A mother's hope is hers...
From Scripture she a name did borrow;
Benoni, or the child of sorrow,
She called her babe unborn. (III, 906, 908-10)

And removed from the final edition, but present in the *Graphic* version, is a positive example of affective association. When Tess leaves Mariott, external phenomena become emotional equivalents: 'The spirit of the spot thrilled her...its placid outlines, tinted with mellow lights and genial shades that were not those of the hour, but the accumulated impressions of the best memories of childhood' (TD, XVI). Such an observation also gives the lie to Burke's contention that 'the pleasures of the sight are not near so complicated, and confused, and altered by...associations', or 'considerations which are independent of the sight itself' (Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), in *The Works of Edmund Burke*, 8 vols (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854), I, 49-181 (I, 56-7)). The Hardy passage may be predicated upon a similar example found in Eliot's *Adam Bede*: 'What keen memories went along the road with him!...But no story is the same to us after a lapse of time; or rather, we who read it are no longer the same interpreters; and Adam this morning brought with him new thoughts through that grey country - thoughts which gave an altered significance to its story of the past' (VI, 54).

⁴² Alexander Bain, 'Associations with Feeling', in *The Senses and the Intellect* (1855; London: Longmans, Green & Co., 4th edn., 1894), pp. 422-433 (pp. 422, 426).

⁴³ Hardy's achievement in this respect gives the lie to J.S. Mill's assertion that 'the objects of an imaginary landscape cannot be said, like the words of a poem or the notes of a melody, to be the actual utterance of a feeling; but there must be some feeling with which they harmonize' ('What is Poetry?' (1833), in *Early Essays of J.S. Mill*, ed. J.W.M. Gibbs (London: Bell, 1897), pp. 201-17 (p. 215)). Equally, Bradley asserts that 'Reality, as it commonly appears, contains terms and relations...But the form of feeling...is not above, but is below, the level of relations; and it therefore cannot possibly express them or explain them. Hence it is idle to suppose, given relational matter as the object to be understood, that feeling will supply any way of understanding it' ('The Reality of Self', in *Appearance and Reality*, Ch. X, pp. 103-20 (p. 107)). Hardy shows that such is not the case. It is interesting to note that D.G. Rossetti, with whose work Hardy was familiar, also used imagery in his poetry to make possible the expression of an emotion or feeling which would otherwise remain unexpressed. The best example of this technique is perhaps the series of four sonnets in *The House of Life* called 'Willowwood' (1869), nos. 49-52. For the extent to which Rossetti influenced Hardy, see Joan Rees, 'Appendix A: Hardy and Rossetti', in *The Poetry of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Modes of Self-Expression* (Cambridge and London: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 197-8. Rees also suggests that Rossetti's image of the shadow in 'The Burden of Nineveh' encouraged Hardy to try for a similar effect in Ch. XVI when the cows come in to be milked and Tess follows them. These shadows in Rossetti's poem and in Hardy's novel have their origins in scientific enlightenment but they owe their sharp and telling definition to Hardy's pessimism and the hard-edged scepticism which Rossetti at times exhibited' (pp. 56-7).

Hardy's absolute co-ordination of this poetic strategy in prose⁴⁴ makes him its master, yet T.S. Eliot, approaching landscape as 'a passive creature which lends itself to an author's mood', vilified Hardy's abuse of its malleability and condemned him as 'an author who is interested not at all in men's minds, but only in their emotions; and perhaps only in men as vehicles for emotion.'⁴⁵ But it is this 'extreme emotionalism', this wanton indulgence in "'self-expression'",⁴⁶ which gives *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* its power. Each environment is the 'self-expression' of the protagonist, and a note predating the novel signposts Hardy's intentions:

People who to one's-self are transient singularities are, to themselves the permanent condition, the inevitable, the normal, the rest of mankind being to them the singularity. Think, that those (to us) strange transitory phenomena, their personalities, are with them always. (*EL*, p. 271; March 1888)

Tess's personality is the 'permanent condition' from which all perceptual, psychological, ontological and emotional considerations originate, yet 'she was not an existence, an experience, a passion, a structure of sensations, to anybody but herself. To all humankind besides Tess was only a passing thought' (*TD*, XIV).⁴⁷ But without the felt interaction of this specific identity, there would be nothing:

Upon her sensations the whole world depended, to Tess: through her existence all her fellow-creatures existed, to her. The universe itself came into being for Tess on the particular day in the particular year in which she was born. (*TD*, XV)⁴⁸

⁴⁴ To call *TD* a poetic novel is no contradiction in terms, though J.S. Mill's contention to the opposite is certainly interesting, and points out the extent of the literary revolution that Hardy engineered: 'Poetry, when it is really such, is truth; and fiction also, if it is good for anything, is truth: but they are different truths. The truth of poetry is to paint the human soul truly: the truth of fiction is to give a true picture of life' ('What is Poetry?', in *Early Essays*, p. 205). What Hardy does is combine the two to express a faithful impression of the life of the human soul.

⁴⁵ T.S. Eliot, *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Heresy* (London: Faber, 1934), p. 54. For a spirited response to Eliot, see Katherine Anne Porter, 'Notes on Criticism of Thomas Hardy', *Southern Review* (Thomas Hardy Centennial Edition), 6 (1940), 150-61. Eliot's critical estimate of Hardy, among others, is also considered by Kristian Smidt, 'T.S. Eliot's Criticism of Modern Prose Fiction', *English Studies*, 76 (Jan 1995), 64-80.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ This gap is also identified by Cytherea who, speaking of others, says, 'They will not feel that what to them is but a poor thought...was a whole life to me...that it was my world, what is to them their world, and they in that of mine, however much I cared for them, only as the thought I seem to be to them. Nobody can enter into another's nature truly, that's what's so grievous' (*DR*, 13.4).

⁴⁸ The question of subjectivity is crucial in the novel. For a discussion of Tess as subject, see Tony Tanner, 'Colour and Movement in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *Critical Quarterly*, 10 (Autumn 1968), 219-39; Terry Eagleton, 'Nature as Language in Thomas Hardy', *Critical Quarterly*, 13 (1971), 155-72; Janet Freeman, 'Ways of Looking at Tess', *Studies in Philology*, 79:3 (1982), 311-23, considers how 'one looks - or fails to look' - at Tess. Hardy's ability to see her whole is 'the only imaginable good' in the tragic world of the novel, yet even this way of viewing is shown to be 'yet another form of possession'. Hardy, 'relentlessly' watching Tess, turns her into 'the sign of his own sensitivity' (p. 323). Kaja Silverman, 'History, Figuration and Female Subjectivity in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *Novel*, 18 (1984), 5-28, suggest that the narrator's point of view 'constructs' Tess, offering different subjective possibilities. See also George Wotton, *Thomas Hardy: Towards a Materialist Criticism* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan; Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble, 1985), pp. 89-94; and Dianne Sadoff, 'Looking at Tess: The Female Figure in Two Narrative Media', in *The Sense of Sex: Feminist*

In a Wordsworthian moment so rare in Hardy's late fiction, Tess lives what the poet feels: 'I had a world about me - 'twas my own; / I made it, for it only lived in me'.⁴⁹ Hardy's poetic disquisition also looks forward to Bradley's metaphysical treatise, *Appearance and Reality* (1893), which, examining the constituent qualities of the essential self and its relation to reality, hypothesizes that

These contents are not merely the man's internal feelings, or merely that which he reflects on as his self. They consist quite as essentially in the outward environment, so far as relation to that makes the man what he is... In brief, regarded as an existence which appears in a soul, the whole world for each is peculiar and private to that soul.⁵⁰

In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, 'the outward environment' is a mutable expression of the equally mutable 'internal feelings' of its 'peculiar...soul', Tess herself.

Such speculations, qualifying the individuality of the consciousness and its world, refute an absolute reality, yet all the time Hardy is approaching the creation of such a singular truth: it is only in relation to Tess that objects exist and have any interest for us.⁵¹ 'A mere vessel of emotion' (*TD*, II), 'a sheaf of susceptibilities' (*TD*, XXVIII),⁵² 'a structure of sensations', 'a creature of moods' (*TD*, XXXI), Tess engages us not by what she thinks so much as by what she feels,⁵³ and her nervous existence is so de-centralized, that thought is synonymous with sensation.⁵⁴ The 'magnitude' of the reality precipitated is assessed not by its 'external displacements' but entirely against her 'subjective experience' (*TD*, XXV),⁵⁵ a view predicated upon Pater's allusion to the 'philosophic mind' which, appreciating the "'perpetual flux" of minds and things', realizes 'that the momentary sensible apprehension of the individual was the only standard of what is or is

Perspectives on Hardy (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 149-71.

⁴⁹ Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (1805), Book III, 141-2.

⁵⁰ Bradley, 'The Meanings of Self', in *Appearance and Reality*, p. 78; 'Body and Soul', in *Appearance and Reality*, Ch. XXIII pp. 295-358 (p. 346).

⁵¹ See Charles P.C. Pettit, 'Hardy's Vision of the Individual in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', in *New Perspectives on Thomas Hardy*, ed. Charles P.C. Pettit (New York: St Martin's Press, 1994), pp. 172-90.

⁵² The MS reads 'impassioned fibres / nerves'.

⁵³ Hardy made the following note from George Moore's essay, 'Turgueneff', in the *Fortnightly Review*, XLIX (Feb 1888), 237-51 (p. 237): 'Turgueneff. He said Zola has created a human being [in the *Assommoir*] Gervaise is a woman...Still the same vicious method pervades the book - the desire to tell us what she felt rather than what she thought' (*LN*, I, 1521).

⁵⁴ Tess is a Poet in the Wordsworthian understanding of the term: 'The Poet thinks and feels in the spirit of the passions of men' ('Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*' (1805), in *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. Michael Mason (London and New York: Longman, 1992), pp. 55-87; Appendix, pp. 87-93, (p. 79). Cp. Teufelsdröckh's passion for Blumine: 'His whole heart and soul and life was hers, but never had he named it love: existence was all a Feeling, not yet shaped into a Thought' (Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, II. V).

⁵⁵ As the manuscript shows, what 'many have begun to learn in these modern days, [is] that the magnitudes...depend not upon materialisms', and extensive revisions defining 'external displacements' show Hardy attempting to reproduce what has been 'learned in modern days' about 'the effect within' on the objective world.

not, and each on the measure of all things to himself.⁵⁶ And though Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* was published too late to have coloured Hardy's ideas at this time, the interrogations and conjectures such topics provoked were general currency, Bradley offering man at any given moment as

a mass of feelings, and thoughts, and sensations, which come to him as the world of things and other persons, and again as himself; and this contains, of course, his views and his wishes about everything.⁵⁷

A major readjustment of perspective had evidently occurred during the transition from *The Woodlanders*. Then, natural and social reality was dominated by 'the abstract thoughts of the analytic school' (*EL*, p. 232; March 1886), but from the start of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, in August 1889, to the turn of the century, being is 'less dependent on abstract reasoning than on the involuntary inter-social emotions' (*D: P2*, p. 146). By this stage, Hardy was convinced that commonplace lives benefited little from speculations born of the 'quick, glittering empirical eye' (*W*, XIV), and that literature's impact relied on 'the force of an appeal to the emotional reason rather than to the logical reason' (*PRF*, p. 115). Along with Arnold, Hardy challenges the inadequate provision made by modern creeds for the needs of 'actual life' (*LN*, I, 1017),⁵⁸ and the 'awakening of this sense' of insufficiency is 'the awakening of the modern spirit' (ib.), what Hardy renamed 'the ache of modernism', and it is this which underpins Tess's attempt to verbalize 'the emotions of all the ages', those 'sensations which men and women have vaguely grasped for centuries' (*TD*, XIX).⁵⁹

Contemplating the disparity between the spheres of feeling and reason in the early 1880s, Hardy concluded that 'the emotions have no place in a world of defect' (*EL*, p. 192; May 1881). Given 'this great & eternal incongruity of man's existence' (*LN*, I,

⁵⁶ Walter Pater, *Marius the Epicurean* (1885), I, 141, 143-4; see *LN*, I, 1549, 1552. Hardy seems to have been reading this work around the time of writing *TD*. Cp. Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*: 'Man, especially the religious man, is to himself the measure of all things, of all reality' (Ch. I: 2, p. 22).

⁵⁷ Bradley, 'The Meanings of Self', in *Appearance and Reality*, p. 77. Even so, Bradley outlines a source of misunderstanding: 'All I know, I may be told, is what I experience, and I can experience nothing beyond my own states. And it is argued that hence my own self is the one knowable reality...The Reality certainly must appear within my psychical existence; but it is quite another thing to limit its whole nature to that field' ('Solipsism', in *Appearance and Reality*, Ch. XXI, pp. 247-60 (p. 259)).

⁵⁸ Matthew Arnold, 'Heine', in *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*, ed. R. H. Super, 11 vols (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960-77), III, 109-32.

⁵⁹ Cp: 'No one can think but through general thought, refined by centuries of culture & experience' (*LN*, I, 1344; Blanche Leppington, 'Amiel's Journal', *Contemporary Review*, XLVII (March 1885), p. 344).

1292),⁶⁰ feelings are 'a blunder of over-doing' (*EL*, p. 192), and Tess is destined by hereditary factors as much as by Fate to suffer because of her affective precocity: 'the human race is too extremely developed for its corporeal conditions, the nerves being evolved to an activity abnormal in such an environment' (*EL*, p. 285; April 1889).⁶¹ Arnold's elegy for the loss of the 'fresh and clear' to 'this strange disease of modern life'⁶² is a conspicuous presence in Hardy's later works:

A time there was...
Before the birth of consciousness,
When all went well...
But the disease of feeling germed,
And primal rightness took the tinct of wrong.
(*'Before Life and After'*, *CP*, 230)⁶³

'This disease / Called sense' has 'waked' us, the subsequent wish to de-evolve to 'normal unawareness' (*'The Aerolite'*, *CP*, 734) registering those 'feelings which might have been called those of the age - the ache of modernism' (*TD*, XIX). In the manuscript, this crucial phrase appeared as the more Arnoldian 'spirit of modernism', the emendation clarifying the sensational basis of that 'spirit'.

Nowhere is this modern 'ache' more fully integrated with an imaginative creation of reality than in Tess's continual remodification of what her world is felt to be:

At times her whimsical fancy would intensify natural processes around her till they seemed part of her own story. Rather they became a part of it; for the world is only a psychological phenomenon, and what they seemed they were. The midnight airs and gusts...were formulae of bitter reproach. A wet day was the expression of irremediable grief. (*TD*, XIII)⁶⁴

⁶⁰ H.D. Traill, 'English Men of Letters. - Stowe', *Athenaeum* (Nov 18, 1882), p. 658.

⁶¹ 'But see the intolerable antilogy / Of making figments feel' (*D*, 1. IV. v).

⁶² Matthew Arnold, 'The Scholar-Gipsy' (1853), in *The Poems of Matthew Arnold*, ed. Miriam Allott (London and New York: Longman, 2nd edn., 1979), line 203. The title of 'The Sick King of Bokhara' (1849) signals the presence of a spiritual as well as a physical malaise, and the poet of 'Resignation' (1849) tells Fausta that there is 'something that infects the world' (line 278). This 'something' is revealed by the bardic narrator of *Tristram and Isolt* (1852) as 'the gradual furnace of the world' which shrivels feeling and

Which kills us in the bloom, the youth, the spring -
Which leaves the fierce necessity to feel,
But takes away the power. (III. 119, 122-4)

'Some tyrannous single thought' has crushed feeling 'By drying up our joy in everything' (III. 127, 125). Empedocles recalls his youth: 'We had not lost our balance then, nor grown / Thought's slaves, and dead to every natural joy' (*'Empedocles on Etna'* (1852), Act II, lines 248-9. See also lines 240-4). It is central to the thesis of *TD*.

⁶³ See Keith M. May, *Nietzsche and the Spirit of Tragedy* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1990). For Hardy, the universe is 'right' in the Nietzschean sense until consciousness begins to consider it: 'Once upon a time there was a star on which clever beasts invented knowing. That was the most arrogant and mendacious minute of world history, but nevertheless it was only a minute.'

⁶⁴ Charlotte Thompson, 'Language and the Shape of Reality in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *English Literary History*, 50:4 (1983), 729-62, rpt. in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A New Casebook*, ed. Peter Widdowson (New York: St Martin's Press; Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), pp. 109-28, sees the 'ruling principle' of the novel's universe as the power of the imaginative mind to influence, even

Via an emotionally-susceptible landscape, Hardy establishes the predictable antithesis between the scientific ('formulae') and the poetic ('expressions'), and employs Leopardi's 'theorie de l'infelicità'⁶⁵ to indict the current condition, 'irremediable grief' being a direct translation of Leopardi's 'l'irrimediabile et universale douleur' which is 'une partie de la société moderne'.⁶⁶ Moreover, the philosophy of unhappiness as universal Truth ('il n'y avait de réel en ce monde qu'une seule chose: l'infelicità'⁶⁷) corroborates Angel's obsession with 'the chronic melancholy which is taking hold of the civilized races' (*TD*, XVIII) and harkens back to Arnold's Callicles,⁶⁸ a poet whose happiness is as yet unravaged by that Leopardian 'exces de douleur produit par l'abus de la pensée'.

The equivocal contention that 'the world is only a psychological phenomenon', or, in Lubbock's phrase, 'a mind grown visible',⁶⁹ has never, until this stage in the Hardy canon, enjoyed expression in such a distilled form, the entire conception of the novel centring around what Bradley would later call 'cerebral localization'.⁷⁰ Body and soul, Tess is 'part of the landscape' (*TD*, XLII) having 'somehow lost her own margin, imbibed the essence of her surrounding, and assimilated herself with it' (*TD*, XIV).⁷¹ In previous

alter, the material world. Metaphorical and other figures may re-shape Tess's world and how we see it, but they can only re-arrange the existing elements of that world, not create a new reality. In *LN*, '1876' NB, entries 175 and 177, Hardy notes that 'the world is only a cerebral phenomenon', and records the Leopardian doctrine of 'irremediable and universal grief'. The phraseology of the Hardy passage translates Leopardi's 'le monde n'est qu'un phénomène cérébral' in the section 'Leopardi et Schopenhauer', in *Poesies et Oeuvres Morales de Leopardi*, trans. F.A. Aulard (Paris, 1880), p. 48. In the MS and *Graphic*, 'psychological' originally read 'cerebral'. The phrase also anticipates Bradley's sceptical conclusion: 'I need say no more on the thesis that the outer world is known only as a state of my organism. Its proper consequence (according to the view generally received) appears to be that everything else is a state of my brain. For that (apparently) is all that can be experienced ... Nature, for each percipient mainly is what to the percipient it seems to be, and it mainly is so without regard to that special percipient' ('Nature', in *Appearance and Reality*, pp. 263, 282).

⁶⁵ F.A. Aulard, 'Essai sur les Idées Philosophique et L'Inspiration Poétique de Leopardi', in *Poesies et Oeuvres Morales de Leopardi*, p. 46. See *LN*, '1867' NB, entries 172-178 n.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 165-6. Hardy bought the *Poemes et Oeuvres de Leopardi*, trans. F.A. Aulard (1880), sometime during 1891, and it was clear that a reading of Leopardi influenced Hardy's conception of Tess's dilemma. This perceptible effect is made all the more clear in Hardy's description of Old Clare: 'His creed of determination was such that it almost amounted to a vice, on its negative side, to a renunciative philosophy which had cousinship with that of Schopenhauer and Leopardi' (*TD*, XXV). (See Mary Ann Kelly, 'Hardy's Reading in Schopenhauer: Tess of the d'Urbervilles', *Colby Library Quarterly*, 18:3 (Sept 1982), 183-98, who argues that *TD* contains Hardy's darkest philosophical inclinations.) The irony present owes its source to Hardy's addition of this sentence to the edition of 1891. For the influence of Leopardi, see Trevor Johnson, 'Hardy, Leopardi and Tess of the d'Urbervilles', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, IX:2 (May 1993), 51-3; G. Singh, 'Thomas Hardy and Leopardi: A Study in Affinity and Contrast', *Rivista di Letteratura Moderna e Comparativa*, (1964-5), 17-8. The essay is in English, but it considers the poems and *The Dynasts*, not the prose. J.B. Bullen, *The Expressive Eye: Fiction and Perception in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 11, feels that Shelley is the more likely source. Trevor Johnson, 'But a Perfunctory Attention?' Hardy as Modern Linguist and Translator', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XII:3 (Oct 1996), 69-78, refers to Hardy's use of phrases from his own translation of Aulard's French version of Leopardi to show that Hardy was anything but ignorant of foreign languages (p. 73).

⁶⁷ F.A. Aulard, 'Essai sur les Idées Philosophique et L'Inspiration Poétique de Leopardi', p. 40.

⁶⁸ The unseen harp-player in 'Empedocles on Etna' (1852). Empedocles' intellectual doubts and his dismissal of the reassuring platitudes of religion and philosophy in some ways reflect the later Hardy. As Hardy lamented in *W*, so Empedocles grieves over his own 'dwindling faculty of joy' (Act II, line 273) and, anticipating the tenor of *JO*, concludes that, 'dead to life and joy' (Act II, line 321), he is 'Nothing but a devouring flame of thought - / But a naked, eternally restless mind!' (Act II, lines 329-330) before hurling himself to death: 'it is the beginning of the coming universal wish not to live' (*JO*, 6.II).

⁶⁹ Percy Lubbock, *The Craft of Fiction* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1921), p. 162.

⁷⁰ Bradley, 'Nature', in *Appearance and Reality*, Ch. XXII, pp. 261-94 (p. 263).

⁷¹ The contentions of this passage are compromised by their expression. 'Imbibed' implies something artificial, a kind of intoxication which has a detrimental effect on perception. In addition, Hardy stretches credulity by expecting us to regard women as basically 'natural' when they can only become natural under specific conditions. See Janice M. Allan, 'The Art of Nature: A Study of Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 22 (Winter 1996), 28-34 (p. 33, n. 8).

works, the existence and perception of objective reality depends on an eye driven by a formative logic: the ethical, intellectual, public and analytical all exert control, impose order, regulate, but affection is intrinsically uncontrollable, chaotic, unreasonable, and rushes as an undammed torrent through *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*.⁷² The channel, Tess, does not so much direct the flow as submit to it, allowing it to inform and creatively reinterpret her world by sensualizing her experiences as personalized 'stories'.

Hardy was impressed by the self-referentiality of the process: 'Thought shapes the very world: matter creates thought: reciprocal action' (*LN*, I, 1279), and for Comte, 'thought depends on sensation (sensation on environment)' (*LN*, I, 731).⁷³ Lewes's essay is of particular significance in this context because it accesses a triple-visioned universe, and Hardy, already practising the first two perspectives, only recorded the third (*LN*, I, 899):

Psychology began to disclose...that all the terms by which we expressed *material qualities* were terms which expressed *modes of Feeling*...Idealism, rejecting this postulate, declared that Matter was simply the projection of the Mind, and that our Body was the objectivation of the Soul. Physiology began to disclose that all mental processes were...*functions* of physical processes, *i.e.* varying with the variations of bodily states; and this was declared enough to banish forever the conception of a Soul.⁷⁴

Tess of the d'Urbervilles interrogates the latter praxis, shows how phenomena only function and become sensible when possessed and processed by Tess's Soul, and prefigures the note of 1924 from Lodge's debate on 'the interactions of Ether & Matter' in the universe:

a demonstration has thus been given us that memory & affection, & personality generally, are not functions of Matter, but only utilize Matter for communication with those in material surroundings (*PNB*, p. 76).⁷⁵

⁷² This may be one reason why Bradley believed that feelings 'would not suffice for a knowledge of reality...For the incompleteness and relativity in the matter given by feeling become, when we reflect on them, open contradiction' ('The Reality of Self', in *Appearance and Reality*, p. 107). And yet, in the kind of inconsistency to which Hardy was prone, Bradley later contests that 'in the end, to know the Universe, we must fall back upon our personal experience and sensation' ('Solipsism', in *Appearance and Reality*, Ch. XXI, pp. 247-60 (p. 260)).

⁷³ Auguste Comte, *System of Positive Polity*, trans. E.S. Beesley and R. Congreve, 4 vols (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1874-7), III, 15. Cp. Bradley: 'For thought is a state of souls, and therefore is made by them, while, upon its side, the soul is a product of thought' ('Body and Soul', in *Appearance and Reality*, p. 306). For Spencer's 'sincere man of science...analysis of mental action may finally bring him down to sensations as the original materials out of which all thought is woven' ('Progress: its Law and Cause', *Westminster Review*, n.s. XI:2 (April 1857), 445-85 (p. 485)).

⁷⁴ Lewes, 'The Course of Modern Thought', p. 325.

⁷⁵ Oliver Lodge, 'Outlook on the Universe', *Nineteenth Century*, XCV (Jan 1924), 137-46 (p. 144).

Landscape in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is a sublimated feeling, and Tess's irrepressible urge to 'intensify natural processes' to reify her sensuous life, to 'utilize Matter for communication', is creative, though retrogressive in evolutionary terms. It follows Comte's

fundamental distinction between the Fetichistic spirit which looks on all objects in nature as animate, and the Theological spirit which regards them as passively subject to supernatural powers...Theologism exaggerates the differences [between man & the rest of organic nature] much more than Fetichism does the resemblances'. (*LN*, I, 754, 760)⁷⁶

Hardy later recorded his own tendency to animate and notice 'countenances and tempers in objects of scenery' (*LY*, p. 58; Feb 1897), but most germane is Comte's belief that 'Fetichism alone kept emotional life directly in view'.⁷⁷ The harmonious pattern of Tess's 'emotional life' is objectified during her journey to Talbothays: 'her hopes mingled with the sunshine in an ideal photosphere' (*TD*, XVI); an astrological idolatry predicated upon Comte's 'celestial fetichism' (*LN*, I, 642)⁷⁸ moulds reality, and her natural 'mood' is defined not by modern '*infelicité*' but by ancient joyousness:

And probably the half-unconscious rhapsody was a Fetichistic utterance in a Monotheistic setting; women whose chief companions are the forms and forces of outdoor Nature retain in their souls far more of the Pagan fantasy of their remote forefathers than of the systemized religion taught their race at a later date. (*TD*, XVI)⁷⁹

Hardy's revisions trace his reconsideration of the Pantheistic and Fetichistic, the former appearing in the *Graphic*. From Comte, Hardy noted that Pantheism was 'a relapse into a vague and abstract form of Fetichism' (*LN*, I, 669), and, by the first edition, adopted the latter term possibly in response to Comte's reasoning that the Greek 'doctrine of Polytheism' was 'less poetic than that of Fetichism (worship of material things), which

⁷⁶ What is more, the socialized Christianity as presented here is responsible for tarnishing the 'more natural, pre-civilized religious time' that manifests itself in the beautiful golden landscapes. See Judith R. Bill, 'The "Golden" World in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *Thomas Hardy Society Review*, 1:10 (1984), 307-10. See Pater on Greek thought: 'in its consciousness of itself, humanity is still confused with the fantastic, indeterminate life of the animal and vegetable world' (*The Renaissance*, p. 206).

⁷⁷ Comte, *System of Positive Polity*, III, 355. Hardy made extensive citations on fetichism. See *LN*, I, 640-3, 647, 755-62.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, III, 95.

⁷⁹ Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (1873; London: Macmillan, 1922), says that 'all religions...arise spontaneously out of the human mind, as expressions of the varying phases of its sentiment concerning the unseen world' (p. 33). Lionel Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy* (1894; rpt. London: The Bodley Head, 1923), states that 'in Mr Hardy's books, rustic religion is represented, as "Fetichistic": a primitive superstition about places and things, persons and practices, of a pagan original, and only disguised under a Christian nomenclature' (p. 151). This battle between the prescriptions of Monotheistic doctrines and a Natural morality is used to accentuate Tess's Pagan origins and her affinity with the Earth Goddess. For an interesting discussion of this topic, see P. Wahl, 'Tess: Moral Heroism & The Earth Goddess', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 22 (Winter 1996), 22-27.

could better idealize the external world' (LN, I, 647).⁸⁰ As Hardy's ambition was to 'idealize' the actual, a Fetichistic strategy was more suitable.

It is arguable that Hardy instigated this obsession with material symbols in Old South's Fetichistic (or psychosomatic, from the analytic standpoint) devotion to the Tree, and though the Hintocks themselves serve a Fetichistic purpose, this aspect is subsidiary to the examination of those perspectives which rationalize and demystify such beliefs. In a *volte-face*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* marginalizes the rational and foregrounds the affective, and her 'Fetichistic utterance', a celebratory song of 'the Pagan instincts' serialized in the *Graphic*, is indicative of a 'universal adoration of matter' (LN, I, 641)⁸¹ which signifies the ancient philosophy of happiness, that 'system of religion known to be true by direct feeling' and characterized by 'joy' (LN, I, 1520).⁸² It was while writing *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* that Hardy cited Tolstoi's sentiment that 'the first condition of happiness...is that the link between man & nature shall not be broken' (LN, II, 1713),⁸³ but these 'Natural' articulations aggravate an already complex 'tangle of inconsistencies' pertaining to this realm,⁸⁴ and are awkward, spontaneous anomalies in a 'systemized ...Monotheistic' Society. Hardy endorses Comte's indication of the negative legacy of mediaevalism (the segregation of divinity and humanity, the destruction of pantheism), and provocatively corporealizes the animistic spirits, 'the forms and forces of outdoor Nature', in his heroine.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Comte, *System of Positive Polity*, III, 234. See Peter: 'Greek religion...is at once a magnificent ritualistic system, and a cycle of poetical conceptions' (*The Renaissance*, p. 200). Hardy completely subverts Newman's position regarding Natural Religion (Hellenic/health) and Christianity (modern/disease) at this point: 'Natural religion is based upon the sense of sin; it recognizes the disease, but it cannot find, it does but look out for the remedy. That remedy, both for guilt and for moral impotence, is found in the central doctrine of Revelation' (John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (1870; London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1909), p. 487). One may say that 'he had mixed in his dull brain two matters, theology and morals, which in the primitive days of mankind had been quite distinct' (TD, XLVII). Yet see Bernard J. Paris, "'A Confusion of Many Standards': Conflicting Value Systems in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*", *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 24:1 (June 1969), 57-79, which argues that Hardy's defence of Tess is contradictory and does not produce any coherent moral vision; he cannot decide whether nature is moral or amoral, whether Tess is fallen or innocent. See also Robert C. Schweik, 'Moral Perspectives in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *College English*, 24 (Oct 1962), 14-18.

⁸¹ Comte, *System of Positive Polity*, III, 95. This cosmic devotion extends to the sun and moon in particular in this novel. And from Comte, Hardy noted 'Astrolatry - a celestial fetichism' (LN, I, 642; *System of Positive Polity*, III, 95). See Lewis B. Horne, 'The Darkening Sun of Tess Durbeyfield', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 13 (1971-2), 299-311, which gives a symbolic reading of the novel, the two major symbols being the sun and the land. See also Julian Meldon D'Arcy, 'Idolatry in Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', in *Proceedings from the Second Nordic Conference for English Studies*, ed. Håken Ringbom and Matti Rissanen (Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 1984), pp. 519-28.

⁸² Henry Maudsley, *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings* (London, 1886), pp. 328-9.

⁸³ Havelock Ellis, 'Tolstoi', *The New Spirit* (London, 1890), p. 205.

⁸⁴ Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, p. 232. Johnson continues: 'What is this "Nature", of which, or of whom, Mr Hardy speaks? Is it a *Natura naturata*, or a *Natura naturans*? Is it a conscious Power? or a convenient name for the whole mass of physical facts?' (ib.).

⁸⁵ See Shirley Stave, *The Decline of the Goddess: Nature, Culture, and Women in Thomas Hardy's Fiction* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1995).

Rabiger's observation that '*Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is a literary prism reflecting a multitude of literary influences'⁸⁶ is certainly substantiated, the novel's affective organizing principle, which respects '*the essential identity* of the conscious mind with unconscious Nature' (*LN*, II, 2105),⁸⁷ being equally indebted to Baudelaire and Brunetière. Hardy appeared to be reading the former during the late 1880s,⁸⁸ and translated the latter's accounts of the symbolic interaction of emotion and landscape only months before beginning *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, his selections illustrating the importance of emotional equivalence in relation to perceptions negotiated by an affective eye. Brunetière polarizes the visual model: 'naturalism', which 'limits itself to the observation of reality' and reduces art to 'no more than an imitation of the exterior contour of things',⁸⁹ resists Symbolism, which teaches that

things have also a soul, of which the bodily eyes only seize the envelope...
'A landscape is a state of the soul'...This does not mean...that a landscape changes its aspect with the state of the soul...[I]ndependently of the sort... of emotion that it awakens within us...a landscape is in itself 'sadness', or 'gaiety'. (*LN*, I, 1639)⁹⁰

Whereas Hardy's phenomenology sees things as emanations of subjective sensations, Brunetière's argues for their affective and ontological autonomy. Brunetière's material world is anterior, a compilation of fixed feelings: we react to it rather than *vice versa*, Hardy's does not even begin to exist until it is forged by a perceptive passion. And though deviating from Brunetière's explanation of affective fundamentals, Hardy accepted his doctrine of symbolic 'correspondences':

between (external) nature & ourselves there are 'correspondences', (latent) 'affinities', mysterious 'identities', & that is only so far as we seize them that, penetrating to the interior of things, can we truly approach the soul of them. (ib.)

⁸⁶ Michael Rabiger, 'Hardy's Fictional Process and his Emotional Life', in *Alternative Hardy*, ed. Lance St John Butler (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 88-109 (p. 99).

⁸⁷ Eduard von Hartmann, *Philosophy of the Unconscious*, trans. W.C. Coupland (London, 1884), III, 303.

⁸⁸ See *LN*, '1865' NB, entries 239-40. See also the extensive citation on 'French Symbolists: Poètes d'Aujourd'hui, 1880-1900' (*LN*, III, 2514; 'Times Literary Supplement' (Sept 14, 1906), pp. 205-6).

⁸⁹ Cp. G.H. Lewes, 'The Principles of Success in Literature', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 (1865), 85-95, 'The Principle of Vision': 185-96, 'Of Vision in Art': 572-89, 697-709; 2 (1865), 257-68, 689-710: 'All bad Literature rests upon imperfect insight, or upon imitation, which may be defined as second-hand seeing' (1, p. 185).

⁹⁰ Frédéric Brunetière, 'Symbolistes et Decadents', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 90 (Nov 1, 1888), 213-26 (pp. 217-8). Cp. Bradley: 'The essence of Nature is to appear as a region standing outside the psychical, and as...suffering and causing change independent of that. Or, at the very least, Nature must not always be directly dependent on soul...It is that part of the world which is not inseparably one thing in experience with those internal groups which feel pleasure and pain' ('Nature', in *Appearance and Reality* p. 268). In this, Bradley, closer to Brunetière, opposes Hardy.

But what Hardy must have found especially persuasive was Brunetière's proposal that, 'if there is something beyond nature, we can only express it with nature's means...& only observation is able to make us masters of those means of...transforming nature' (*LN*, I, 1640).⁹¹ The 'eye of affection' empowers 'those means'.

Baudelaire, theorizing in a similar capacity, envisages the imagination, the 'Mysterieuse faculté que cette reine des facultés!',⁹² as 'une faculté quasi divine qui perçoit...les rapports intimes et secrets des choses, les correspondances, et les analogies'.⁹³ Baudelaire's poetry familiarized Hardy with this system,⁹⁴ his indoctrination into symbolist ideology and its celebration of synaesthetic experience occurring with his translation of 'Reversibilité' during 1888/9:

La Nature est un temple où des vivants piliers
Laisent parfois sortir de confuses paroles;
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.⁹⁵

The notion that Nature and human nature are temples accessed through 'forests of symbols' reinforced the growing belief that the Soul of things contained the secret essence of mankind's emotional life. Already the French Symbolist movement was demonstrating its extensive influence on foreign literature, a trend which was to continue with increasing momentum well into the twentieth century.⁹⁶

Tess of the d'Urbervilles is typical of Hardy's eclecticism, but whether it assimilates such gleanings cohesively is more problematical. Nevertheless, such borrowings, however diverse, move in one direction and extend the Hellenism/Modernism debate initiated in *The Return of the Native*. Though Hardy was well versed in the classics, any attempt to confirm direct influence is inconclusive for English

⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 219-23. See Bruce Johnson, *True Correspondence: A Phenomenology of Thomas Hardy's Novels* (Tallahassee, Florida: Florida State University Press, 1983).

⁹² Charles Baudelaire, *Modern French Poets on Poetry: An Anthology*, arranged and annotated by Robert Gibson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. 59.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 63.

⁹⁴ This being that objective phenomena conceal a profound reality, that things possess a latent interconnectedness, and that the most prosaic of objects are symbols for obscure ideals and meanings.

⁹⁵ From 'Reversibilité' ('Correspondences'), in *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857; rpt. Paris: Editions Garnier Freres, 1954), p. 14. Hardy anticipates this 'forest of symbols' in the 'living pillars' of the Hinkock trees, the 'unconfused words' of which Giles and Marty 'observe with des regards familiers'. They had been possessed of its finer mysteries as of commonplace knowledge: had been able to read its hieroglyphs as ordinary writing... (*W*, XLIV).

⁹⁶ Particularly Yeats, T.S. Eliot (through Laforgue), Joyce, and Woolf (through Proust). It also anticipates Freud's theory of dreams, that behind the 'manifest content' of a dream lies its 'latent content', the dream standing as the symbolical expression of its real meaning.

literature and thinking were then saturated with Hellenism.⁹⁷ Evidence in the *Literary Notes* suggests Hardy was examining documents with an Hellenic bias as early as the mid 1870s, and a reading of Symonds's *Studies of the Greek Poets* (1876) in the year of publication may have shown him how to transpose Hellenic ideologies into imaginative literature.⁹⁸ Symonds's ambition, to make his 'meaning clear about the value of the study of Greek modes of thought and feeling for men living in our scientific age',⁹⁹ was Hardy's inheritance.

In 1893, Hardy came across a proposition which contextualized this partnership:

There is nothing more fascinating for a modern mind than to study the essential forces of Paganism... We can recognize that the ecstasies of the cult [of Dionysus] were inherent in a system of Nature Worship... [W]e can see the virtue of Paganism in making a virtue of joy. (*LN*, II, 1905)¹⁰⁰

The 'spirit' which oversees Marlott and its vicinity is Dionysian, the 'curious compounds' (*TD*, X) providing an alternative perspective on the secular. Social indulgence liberates citizens from pressing economic worries - 'a sort of halo, an occidental glow, came over life then. Troubles and other realities took on themselves a metaphysical impalpability, sinking to mere mental phenomena for serene contemplation' (*TD*, III) - and imparts a degree of 'mental comfort... wherein their souls expanded beyond their skins' (*TD*, IV).¹⁰¹ Inebriation precludes a world-vision filtered through a 'mean unglamoured eye' (*TD*, X).

⁹⁷ See Lennart A. Bjork, *Psychological Vision and Social Criticism in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1987), p. 163 n. 33.

⁹⁸ The timing of Symonds's work may in part explain why *RN* and not *FMC*, published two years before the *Studies*, was Hardy's first Hellenic novel.

⁹⁹ J.A. Symonds, *Studies of the Greek Poets* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1876), p. 373. Hardy must have found particularly attractive was Symonds's concentration on the centrality of emotion in Greek morality. This connection qualifies De Laura's assertion that the classical references associated with the "natural" Tess and the early Sue Bridehead are not developed into a cohesive view of life, his conception of the phrase 'view of life' focusing on 'morality', for the coherence is present in the interplay of the natural world and Hellenic affection made possible by perception (David De Laura, "The Ache of Modernism" in *Hardy's Later Novels*, *English Literary History*, 34 (Sept 1967), 380-99 (p. 396)). See Ch. 7, 'The Ache of Modernism', of Robert Gilmour's *The Novel in the Victorian Age: A Modern Introduction* (London: Arnold, 1986), pp. 185-95, which highlights Hardy's debt to Darwinism, and his conversion of the 'sensation' novel into a vehicle of poetic impressionism. For further analyses of Hardy's debt to Darwin, see Elliot B. Gose, 'Psychic Evolution: Darwinism and Initiation in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 18:3 (1963), 261-72; Peter Morton, 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Neo-Darwinian Reading', *Southern Review*, 7 (1974), 38-50; Bruce Johnson, "'The Perfection of the Species" and Hardy's Tess', in *Nature and the Victorian Imagination*, ed. U.C. Knopfmacher and G.B. Tennyson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 259-77; Roger Robinson, 'Hardy and Darwin', in *Thomas Hardy: The Writer and His Background*, ed. Norman Page (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), pp. 128-50; Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983); George Levine, *Darwin and the Novelists: Patterns of Science in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988); and Kevin Padian's "'A Daughter of the Soil": Themes of Deep Time and Evolution in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XIII: 3 (Oct 1997), 65-81.

¹⁰⁰ 'Pedantic and Humane', *National Observer* (Jan 7, 1893), pp. 191-2.

¹⁰¹ Cp. Bradley: 'In madness and drunkenness we have the distinction of imaginary from real' ('On Floating Ideas and the Imaginary', in *Essays on Truth and Reality*, Ch. III, pp. 28-64 (p. 46)).

Quite apart from obscuring social responsibilities, the 'occidental glow' is coaxed into existence for pleasurable purposes alone. Symonds suggests that such 'ecstasies' were adequate hymns (perhaps akin to Tess's Fetichistic rhapsody) for 'congregations for whom the "cosmic emotion" is a reality and a religion' (*LN*, I, 1150),¹⁰² and Fourier, detailing *The Passions of the Human Soul*, juxtaposes the Hellenic and Modern spirit:

ANTIQUITY, nearer to the true religious spirit than we are, deified the pleasures and made them objects of worship...The modern age thinks otherwise; it...erects [the pleasures] into vices.¹⁰³

Above all, such antediluvian venerations opposed individualism - 'the all-pervasive state of civilization'¹⁰⁴ - and instead aimed to 'lead us into social harmony through the medium of the pleasures'.¹⁰⁵ Communal hedonism¹⁰⁶ motivates the Trantridge revellers, and chapter X, originally entitled 'Saturday Night in Arcady', transforms them into a multiplicity of Syrinxes and Pans. Discovering 'perfect partners' is the aim of these Bacchanalians¹⁰⁷ for whom 'music and dance embody the beat of life',¹⁰⁸ and once this pulse explodes into the progenitive 'vegeto-human pollen', 'the ecstasy and the dream began in which emotion was the matter of the universe, and matter but an adventitious

¹⁰² J.A. Symonds, 'Matthew Arnold's Selection from Wordsworth', *Fortnightly Review*, XXVI (Nov 1, 1879), 687-701; summary with key words. Hardy shared Symonds's concern for contemporary and future 'mental and emotional life' ('Apology', pp. 56-7). Pater's discussion of this 'universal pagan sentiment' takes into account its 'worship of sorrow, its *addolorata*' (*The Renaissance*, pp. 201, 203), and is thus particularly applicable to the affective Hellenic balance of *TD*.

¹⁰³ Charles Fourier, *The Passions of the Human Soul*, trans. John Reynell Morell, 2 vols (London: np, 1851), I, 247.

¹⁰⁴ Frank Manuel, *The Prophets of Paris* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 221.

¹⁰⁵ Charles Fourier, *The Passions of the Human Soul*, I, 247.

¹⁰⁶ For a consideration of hedonism and its relation to 'goodness' and morality, see Bradley's 'Goodness', in *Appearance and Reality*, Ch. XXV, pp. 401-54 (pp. 404-7).

¹⁰⁷ See Arnold's, 'Bacchanalia; or, The New Age' (1864-7). Arnold felt that a 'new age' was dawning, as he also relates in 'Obermann Once More', espec. lines 281-312. Hardy may also have been drawing directly from Keats's 'Endymion' (1818), in *The Poems of John Keats*, ed. Miriam Allott (London and New York: Longman, 1970), (lines 172-181 of Book IV supplying the motto to *RN*) where Phoebe relates her encounter with the revelling 'merry Damsels' (Book IV, 218) and 'jolly Satyrs' (Book IV, 228). They describe why they follow Bacchus, that 'Great God of breathless cups and chirping mirth!' (line 236) - 'A conquering!...We dance before him thorough kingdoms wide' (lines 223, 225); 'For wine we follow Bacchus through the earth' (line 235) - and attempt to persuade her to join their 'wild...mad minstrelsy!' (lines 227, 238). Phoebe (Cynthia / the Moon, no less) declines much as does Tess, and beckons instead the company of 'Sweetest Sorrow! / Like an own babe I nurse thee on my breast' (lines 280-1); only Sorrow 'can comfort a poor lonely maid... / Thou art...her wooer in the shade' (lines 287-290). It is terribly apposite.

¹⁰⁸ Joan Grundy, *Hardy and the Sister Arts* (London: Macmillan, 1979), p. 140. Dance, as Simon Gatrell shows in 'Hardy's Dances', *Thomas Hardy and the Proper Study of Mankind* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), pp. 24-41, is crucial. Sondra Fraleigh, *Dance and the Lived Body: A Descriptive Aesthetics* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987), explains that the whole self is shaped by the experience of dance, since body is besouled, bespirited and beninded' (pp. 9, 11). And as the dance is 'fully realized it ceases to be an object of consciousness...To understand the dancer as the dance is to understand a point of unification, which is a state of being when the dance is lived not as an object but as a pure consciousness' (p. 40). Judyth Lynne Hanna, *To Dance is Human: A Theory of Non-Verbal Communication* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), describes dance as 'a multidimensional phenomenon codifying sensory experience. Furthermore, it can lead to altered states of consciousness' (p. 66). Hardy also seems to have had Zola in mind: 'The dust rose from the floor - the dust accumulated by the various dancing-bouts, & poisoned the atmosphere with a strong odour of tram-girls & boys' [i.e. the dancers] (*LN*, '1867', entry 198; *Germinal*, or, *Master and Man* (London, 1885), p. 223).

intrusion' (ib.), an unassailable vindication of Lewes's premise that 'Matter is for us the Felt; its Qualities are differences of Feeling'.¹⁰⁹

The over-riding impulse to satisfy 'the chief pleasure' requires a new code of social ethics. Fourier's answer, 'unityism', is based on feeling, and when the system is treated 'as a distinct passion it is the one which links a man's happiness with all that surrounds him'.¹¹⁰ Hardy's convoluted solution amalgamates Fourier's precept and Symonds's paradigm which 'leaned on a faith or belief in the order of the universe' and saw 'Humanity [as] a part of the universal whole' (*LN*, I, 631):¹¹¹

The conception of morality as the law for man, regarded as a social being forming part and parcel of the cosmos, was implicit in the whole Greek view of life: it received poetical expressions from the tragedians.¹¹²

And Pater's discussion of 'the Hellenic ideal, in which man is at unity with himself, with his physical nature, with the outward world', discloses a 'shameless and childlike' quality which 'imparts to genuine artistic interests a kind of intoxication'.¹¹³ Thus, on their way home, the drunken 'children of the open air' see

themselves and surrounding nature forming an organism of which all the parts harmoniously and joyously interpenetrated each other... The erratic motions seemed an inherent component of the night's mist; and the spirit of the scene, and of the moonlight, and of Nature, seemed harmoniously to mingle with the spirit of wine. (*TD*, X)¹¹⁴

As Gatrell points out, Hardy's ambivalent presentation of drinking leads us to expect irony in such a passage, but the presentation denies this expectation,¹¹⁵ the

¹⁰⁹ Lewes, 'The Course of Modern Thought', p. 320.

¹¹⁰ Frank Manuel, *The Prophets of Paris*, p. 221. Fourier's first full-length work, *Theorie des Quatre Mouvements et des Destinées Generales* (1808), expounded his social system and his plans for the co-operative organization of society. The system, based on the universal principle of harmony, displayed in four departments: the material universe, organic life, animal life, and human society. This harmony would flourish only when the restraints that conventional social behaviour imposed upon full gratification of desire were abolished.

¹¹¹ J.A. Symonds, *Studies of the Greek Poets*, pp. 384-5.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 383.

¹¹³ Pater, *The Renaissance*, p. 222.

¹¹⁴ Hardy's expression of this belief may be predicated upon Symonds, but it also seems to anticipate C.J. Jung's comments on the collective unconscious and the relationship that man shared with the cosmos: 'The psyche and the cosmos are related to each other like inner and outer worlds. Therefore man participates by nature in all cosmic events and is inwardly, as well as outwardly, interwoven with them' ('A Commentary on "The Secrets of the Golden Flower"', in *Collected Works*, ed. Herbert Read et al., 20 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953-79), XIII, 11).

¹¹⁵ Simon Gatrell, *Thomas Hardy*, pp. 163 ff. See also Denis W. Thomas, 'Drunkenness in Thomas Hardy's Novels', *College Language Association Journal*, 28 (1984), 190-209. Thomas argues that, unlike Dickens's tipplers, Hardy's rustics drink because of the brutality of their environment. Drinking ceases to be a communal celebration. This is certainly questionable in the Trantridge context.

sympathetic, ecstatic narrative eye seeing a harmonized vision which the sober, 'mean unglamoured eye' would discount as an illusive reality destined to evaporate with the alcoholic fumes. And this view sublimates the superlative recommendation of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*: primitive man's understanding of immediate reality is 'harmoniously and joyously' felt. The 'sciences make us more intimately acquainted with Man's relation to the universe', yet they do nothing to lead minds which recognize 'a mystery in Nature far beyond our ken' toward the 'inner truth' (*LN*, I, 1151).¹¹⁶ Only imagination can fuse ancient religion and modern rationality; only poetical expression can supply the requisite feelings and spiritual intensity, 'the fervour & piety that humanize [Nature's] truths, & bring them into harmony with the permanent emotions of the soul'.¹¹⁷

This Attic perspective may owe as much to Nietzsche as to Arnold and Symonds. As conceived in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), the Apollonian and Dionysian in art are founded on dreams and instincts respectively, and though Hardy did not record his findings until 1902, he was possibly aware of this dualism earlier. The pertinent citations describe an antagonism of potential significance: 'Art arises...from the conflict of the two creative spirits, symbolized by...Apollo & Dionysus' (*LN*, II, 2194).¹¹⁸ Delineating the 'beauteous appearance of the dream-worlds',¹¹⁹ the poetical Apollonian offsets the musical Dionysian, a 'drunkenness' which, originating in orgiastic rites, became a transcendental 'lyric cry' or 'ecstasy' that sought 'to destroy the individual and redeem him by a mystic feeling of Oneness', 'the highest gratification of the Primordial Unity'.¹²⁰ Despite the oppositional model, Dionysian energy gives the substance to Apollonian form, and Hardy, apparently remoulding the essence of *The Birth of Tragedy* in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, appears to have anticipated Nietzsche's expansion of the theory in *The Will to Power*.

¹¹⁶ J.A. Symonds, *Studies of the Greek Poets*, pp. 698-701.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* See the 'Apology' for Hardy's exploration of how 'poetry and religion touch each other' (p. 56), and his response to Arnold's 'The Study of Poetry'. See also *LN*, I, 1159 for his reading of Arnold's 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time'. The power of poetry to humanize natural truths is used in Hardy's argument against 'scientific realism' in *SF* where he also quotes from Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* (line 91): 'A sight for the finer qualities of existence, an ear for the "still sad music of humanity", are not to be acquired by the outer senses alone' (*SF*, p. 137).

¹¹⁸ Arthur Symonds, 'Nietzsche, on Tragedy', *Academy*, LXIII (Aug 30, 1902), 220.

¹¹⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, volume I of *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Oscar Levy trans. W.A. Haussmann, 18 vols (London and Edinburgh: T.N. Foulis, 1910-13), I, 22-3.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 27-8.

The word 'Dionysus' expresses:...a soaring above personality, the commonplace, society, reality, and above the abyss of the *ephemeral*; the passionately painful sensation of superabundance, in darker, fuller and more fluctuating conditions; an ecstatic saying of yea to the collective character of existence;...the great pantheistic sympathy with pleasure and pain which declares even the most terrible and questionable qualities of existence good, and sanctifies them;... the feeling of unity in regard to the necessity of creating and annihilating.¹²¹

In Nietzschean terms, Alec plays Dionysus (active, narcotic power) to Angel's Apollo (passive, mesmerizing dream), but both are integrated in the novel, balanced in Tess, and expressed in the symbolism of the choric dance. This work *is* the process of 'creating and annihilating': it unveils the 'beauteous' aspect of the 'dreamland' even while this luminous Apollonian form is sabotaged by the Dionysian world of darker impulses, for, as Stephen knew, 'one of the conditions of dream-land is that it should admit the phantoms of terror as well as of ecstasy'.¹²²

In 1893, Hardy denounced social systems demanding that 'all temperaments... shape themselves to a single pattern of living' and suggested a self-dictated 'society divided into *groups of temperaments*' (*LY*, p. 23; July 1893)¹²³ as a remedial step, for Tess, though of the same social group as the Trantridge folk, ostracizes herself by her emotional and ethical reaction to them as a hedonistic (Dionysian) 'whorage' (*TD*, X), and her poetical (Apollian) realization of the landscape. The ecstatic 'irradiation', 'mist' and 'illuminated' smoke of the dance are replaced by the phantasmal obscuring fog emblematic of Alec, the 'blue narcotic haze' (*TD*, V) of his cigar which screens his initial appearance reducing Tess to a trance-like condition.¹²⁴ During the euphemistic acceptance of the strawberries,¹²⁵ the Tess of the *Graphic* is in 'an abstracted half-hypnotized state', but the confused mesmerism of the passage as it now stands (her

¹²¹ Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, volume XV of *The Complete Works*, ed. Oscar Levy, trans. A.M. Ludovici, XV, 1051.

¹²² Leslie Stephen, 'Dreams and Realities', in *An Agnostic's Apology, and Other Essays* (London: Smith & Elder, 1893; rpt. Bristol: Thoemmes, 1991), pp. 86-126 (p. 114).

¹²³ This is almost certainly attributable to the influence of Fourier who advocated a system of social reorganization to ensure the maximum of co-operation in the interests of personal and collective harmony. Like Hardy after him, Fourier proposed the regrouping of society into co-operative communities, the internal organization of which would allow for a variety of occupation and a large measure of sexual freedom. It is possible that Hardy read Fourier's *Traite de l'Association Domestique Agricole* (1822). See n. 110 above.

¹²⁴ Cp. George Eliot's description of the effect Dormithorne has on Hetty. There is a similar 'narcotic' seduction of the senses, his 'vague, atmospheric' influence 'producing a pleasant narcotic effect, making her...go about her work in a sort of dream, unconscious of weight or effort, and showing her all things through a soft, liquid veil, as if she were living...in a beautiful world' (*Adam Bede*, I. 9). Hardy also seems to rewrite Emma Bovary's meeting with Rodolph in the woods - rendered in terms of his cigar, whip, and the long drawn-out cry - using Alec's cigar and horse, and Tess's sobbing-cry.

¹²⁵ Penny Boumelha, *Thomas Hardy and Women: Sexual Ideology and Narrative Form* (Brighton: Harvester, 1982), identifies this scene, along with Manston's masterly playing on his organ before Cytherea's eyes in *DR* and Troy's suggestive sword-play, as 'getting sex past the censors' (p. 30). T.C. Wright, *Hardy and the Erotic* (London: Macmillan, 1989), explains that Hardy's contemporaries punned on Wessex, making 'Wessex-mania equate with sex-mania' (p. 12).

'unconscious' eating is undertaken in 'a half-pleased, half-reluctant state') presages her emotional state when forced to accommodate physical attention she would rather refuse in The Chase.

The latent mysteriousness of this episode, one of Hardy's 'daring experiments',¹²⁶ is more suggestive of an enchantment than a real action, an illusion where matter is emotion. The 'luminous fog which had hung in the hollows all the evening' condenses surrounding pressures and visualizes Alec's duplicitous designs; the 'webs of vapour' naturalize Tess's tears and intensify her 'inexpressibly weary' state; the illuminated mists 'seemed to hold the moonlight in suspension' as if in anticipation, and an overwhelming lethargy proscribes any willed activity on Tess's part. Her 'absent-mindedness, or... sleepiness', is the doom-laden prologue to that 'one moment of oblivion' when, 'overcome by actual drowsiness', she falls asleep against her abductor (TD, XI).¹²⁷ At this precipitous moment, the essential reality of the setting - itself, in Van Ghent's words, a 'function of psychic and cosmic blindness'¹²⁸ - is obliterated. Though it is obvious that *esse est percipi*, Hardy's extreme literalness offers a unique interpretation, and whereas elsewhere in the canon phenomena enjoy an autonomy which guarantees their integrity once deprived of a perceiving consciousness, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* renders this

¹²⁶ R. Y. Tyrrell, *Fortnightly Review*, LXV, n.s. LIX (June 1896), 857-64; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 286-292 (I, 288). It also illustrates the abuse of aristocratic power. See George Levine, 'Shaping Hardy's Art: Vision, Class, and Sex', in *The Columbia History of the British Novel*, eds. John Richetti et al., (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 533-59; Merryn and Raymond Williams, 'Hardy and Social Class', in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A New Casebook*, ed. Peter Widdowson (New York: St Martin's Press, 1993), pp. 24-32.

¹²⁷ The moment is adumbrated by the death of Prince, a brutal prolepsis of her imminent rape. See Dorothy Van Ghent, 'On Tess of the d'Urbervilles', in *The English Novel: Form and Function* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1953; rpt. New York: Harper, 1961), pp. 195-209: in this episode 'are concatenated in fatal union Tess's going to "claim kin" of the d'Urbervilles and all the other links in her tragedy down to the murder of Alec' (p. 198). See also J. Hillis Miller, 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles: Repetition as Imminent Design', in *Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 116-46, for a discussion of this death as an initiatory metaphor which is repeated throughout the novel; Annie Ramel, 'L'Un Distinct ou L'Indistinct? Le Destin Tragique de Tess', *Cahiers Victorians et Edouardiens*, 35 (April 1992), 201-16; Martin Heusser, 'Deja Vu with a Difference: Repetition and the Tragic in Thomas Hardy's Novels', in *Repetition*, ed. Andreas Fischer (Tubingen: Narr, 1994), pp. 171-87. Hardy may have been drawing from De Quincey's articles on *The Glory of Motion* and *The Vision of Sudden Death*, which make up *The English Mail Coach* (1849), in *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*, ed. David Masson, 14 vols (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1889-90; London: Adam and Charles Black, 1897), IV, 287-352, which originated in seeing a narrowly averted collision between a mail coach (on which De Quincey was riding) and a gig: 'A movement of horror, and of spontaneous recoil from this dreadful scene, naturally carried the whole of that scene, raised and idealized, into my dreams, and very soon into a rolling succession of dreams'. This summarizes the proleptic and repetitive effect of the scene in TD which may also be predicated upon Shelley's *Adonais* (1821), in *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1905; rpt. 1961): 'Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay, / When thy son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies / In darkness?' (II, lines 10-12). Prince is pierced by the pointed shaft of the cart which sped 'along these [dark] lanes like an arrow', and the same agonized question arises at the climactic moment in the Chase, only this time 'Tess's guardian angel' is invoked. As to the rape/seduction controversy, see Kristin Brady, 'Tess and Alec: Rape or Seduction?', *Thomas Hardy Annual: No. 4*, ed. Norman Page (London: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 127-47, who concludes that The Chase scene is left deliberately 'engulfed in fog, darkness and silence' to heighten 'the complexity and the contradictoriness' of Tess's sexual responsiveness. See also Rosemarie Morgan, 'Passive Victim?: Tess of the d'Urbervilles', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 5:1 (1989), 31-54; Ellen Rooney's two articles, 'Criticism and the Subject of Sexual Violence', *Modern Language Notes*, 98 (1983), 1269-78; and 'A Little More than Persuading': Tess and the Subject of Sexual Violence', in *Rape and Representation*, ed. Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 86-114.

¹²⁸ Van Ghent, 'On Tess of the d'Urbervilles', p. 198.

technique redundant. The moon sets, Tess's 'moonlit person ...became invisible as she fell into a reverie',¹²⁹ and as she loses self-consciousness, she slips from view and ceases to exist; thus everything that she has seen/felt into material substantiality dissolves into the nothingness of 'thick darkness'. Up until now, Tess has been highly visualized, but only twice does she disappear completely while remaining an absent presence, for only as a displaced metaphor - here a black night, later a black flag - can this visible soul, this seen emotion, be 'faithfully presented' as she appears to 'Thomas Hardy', an expressive strategy which suggests that the fundamental realities of Tess's life, sex and death,¹³⁰ are synonymous, unknowable and unrepresentable.

The Tess that emerges from this *neant* has been warped by culture's way of looking at her, and so, therefore, is the world that she sees. Through 'a mistaken creation of...fancy', she transplants society's ethical condemnation of her iniquitous conduct¹³¹ onto a personal environment, and by pointing out her 'mistake', the narrative addresses Hardy's uncertainty of the fallaciousness of the pathetic fallacy. Tess's 'whimsical fancy would intensify natural processes', yet the narrator's objective reality implies that Tess is deceiving herself twice over, 'for all the time she was making a distinction where there was no difference' (*TD*, XIII). But her real error of judgement is to see in amoral nature a mood of social vituperation. After Baudelaire, the natural images of grief simply are; their assumed ethical meaning and antipathy is wholly anomalous, and Hardy's understanding that the tyrants overseeing conduct come from the psyche marks him as one of the most forward-looking *fin de siècle* writers. Indeed, the irony of Tess's self-

¹²⁹ The Victorians were fascinated to the point of obsession with the sleeping beauty image, and the culture abounds in icons of beautiful, corpse-like women. Tennyson's 'Mariana' (1830) and 'Lady of Shalott' (1832), and Millais' 'Ophelia' (1852), are all transfigured through life-like death, a state inherited by Eustacia upon her watery death. Stoker's Mina and Lucy (1897) are prone to somnambulism and are as unable to remain awake during the day-time as Tess. To illustrate her exploration of the sleeping beauty image (which she says contributed to the passive woman ideal), Nina Auerbach, *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), uses the characteristic sleepiness of Tess. It was a tradition no doubt reaching back to the Romantics, and R.C. Bald, 'Coleridge and "The Ancient Mariner"', in *Nineteenth Century Studies*, ed. H. Davis et al. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1940), discusses Coleridge's idea of reverie: 'But, between the normal modes of mental activity and the passivity of dreaming there are various states in which the usual controls imposed by the will and the reason are relaxed in differing degrees, and to these Coleridge applied the inclusive term "reverie"' (pp. 39-40). This is Tess's characteristic condition. Joan Grundy, *Hardy and the Sister Arts* (London: Macmillan, 1979), suggests that Tess can be associated with Amina, the heroine of Bellini's *La Sonnambula*, in shared characteristics (innocence, purity, tendency to somnambulism, devotion to the lover who rejects them) rather than situation (p. 156). Bellini's work also includes two characters called Theresa and Lisa. Boumelha, *Thomas Hardy and Women*, remarks that 'Tess is asleep, or in a reverie, at almost every crucial turn of the plot...Tess is most herself - and that is, most women - at points when she is dumb and semi-conscious' (pp. 121-2).

¹³⁰ See John B. Humma, 'Language and Disguise: The Imagery of Nature and Sex in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *South Atlantic Review*, 54:4 (1989), 63-83; and James Kincaid, "'You Did Not Come': Absence, Death and Eroticism in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*", in *Sex and Death in Victorian Literature*, ed. Regina Barreca (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 9-31.

¹³¹ See Roger Craik, 'Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *Explicator*, 53:1 (Fall 1994), 41-3, for an analysis of the novel's treatment of pregnancy.

inflicted censure lies in recognizing the incongruous presence of the 'cloud of moral hobgoblins', a presentiment of socially-engendered subjective anxieties; but Tess is incapacitated for life by her orthodox moral scrupulousness.¹³²

While writing *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* Hardy observed that 'that which, socially, is a great tragedy, may be in Nature no alarming circumstance' (*EL*, p. 286; May 1889); a decade before, he cited from Disraeli that 'there are really no miseries except natural miseries - conventional misfortunes are mere illusions' (*LN*, I, 1129).¹³³ Such considerations confront the ambivalence of Tess's reality: she is one thing 'to the eye of civilization', another 'to the eye of Nature' (*TD*, XXIII). What is unequivocal, however, is the negativity of the feelings inculcated by the former; 'innate sensations' naturally incline toward joy, but those 'generated by her conventional aspect' (*TD*, XIV) induce despair and generate the dreadful 'chasm' which is to 'divide our heroine's personality hereafter from that previous self of hers' (*TD*, XI) by dislocating body (environment) and soul (character).

The postulated corrective is a return to the seat of emotions, the land itself, but encroaching social dogmas rise to vitiate the vitality of the passions: 'the two forces were at work here as everywhere, the inherent will to enjoy, and the circumstantial will against enjoyment' (*TD*, XLIII). Hardy, alluding to 'the determination to enjoy' only two days after meeting Pater in July 1888, was perhaps thinking of the Hellenic debate in 'Winklemann' which explores the 'irresistible natural powers' of 'pagan sentiment',¹³⁴ and defines Hellenic feeling as 'the anodyne which the religious principle...has added to the law which makes life sombre for the vast majority of mankind'.¹³⁵ Yet Hardy turns to Browning¹³⁶ to express the absolute irresistibility of the natural impulse: 'The "appetite

¹³² See Atma Ram, 'Morality in Tess: An Adjustment of Images', *Punjab University Research Bulletin*, 15:1 (April 1984), 65-72; Byron Caminero-Santangelo, 'A Moral Dilemma: Ethics in Tess of the d'Urbervilles', *English Studies*, 75:1 (Jan 1994), 46-61.

¹³³ Benjamin Disraeli, *Coningsby*, Bradenham Edn. (London, 1927), VIII, 125.

¹³⁴ Walter Pater, *The Renaissance*, p. 201.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 202. For a relevant consideration of Hardy's knowledge of the anthropological background, see Rosemary L. Eakins, 'Tess: The Pagan and Christian Traditions', in *The Novels of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Anne Smith (New York: Barnes & Nobles; London: Vision Press, 1979), pp. 107-25.

¹³⁶ Peter Mudford, *The Art of Celebration* (London: Faber & Faber, 1979), pp. 47-60, argues for Hardy's persistent attempt at optimism, and in *TD*, Hardy's vision of joy does not end with Tess's execution. See Mary McBride, '"Appetite for Joy": A Browning Allusion in Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles', *Studies in Browning and His Circle*, 8:2 (1980), 92-3; Furse Swann, 'Thomas Hardy and the "Appetite for Joy"', *Powys Review*, 3:4 (No. 12) (Spring 1983), 39-47; Robert Langbaum, 'Hardy and Browning', *Studies in Browning and His Circle*, 17 (Sept 1989), 15-22. See also Roy Morrell, 'Hardy, Darwin and Nature', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 2 (1986), 28-32, who declares that Hardy shares with Darwin 'a passionate sense of possible happiness' and a belief in the value of the 'will to life'.

for joy" which pervades all creation, that tremendous force which sways humanity to its purpose...was not to be controlled by vague lucubrations over the social rubric' (*TD*, XXX).¹³⁷ In accordance with Fourier's injunction that 'the all-pervasive misery of mankind stemmed from the suppression of passion',¹³⁸ Hardy raises indulgence over self-denial, and in celebrating the 'zest for life' (*TD*, XVI) presents a view of reality which relieves the suicidal impulse of *The Woodlanders*. The determination is to feel, not to analyse; to live, not to annihilate:

Thought of the determination to enjoy. We see it in all nature...Even the most oppressed of men and animals find it, so that...there is hardly one who has not a sun of some sort for his soul. (*EL*, p. 279; July 1888)¹³⁹

Reinterpreting Zola's comment, 'for years he had never seen the sun...gazing inwards on his own soul' (*LN*, '1867' *NB*, entry 181),¹⁴⁰ each of the Cerealiens owns 'a sun of some sort for her soul to bask in' (*TD*, I), and Tess's eye kindles with a spiritual soul-light which projects her 'native joyousness, & exaltation in life' (*LN*, I, 464)¹⁴¹ onto the world.

Hardy's employment of Aulard's 'gout de vivre', associated with 'des prejudices d'enfance',¹⁴² expands that 'zest for existence' characteristic of 'the race when it was young' (*RN*, 3.I) which bursts forth in fiery defiance of the darkness heralding modern intellectualism, a system which is victorious by the time of *The Woodlanders*. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* momentarily reverses the trend by exulting the indomitability of passion, and Tess's soul is so luminous and illuminating that she radiates a reality of pure emotion, of love for the bright angel:

¹³⁷ The *Graphic* version of this passage draws explicit attention to the disparity between social and natural dictates. The "'appetite" which stimulates all creation...was not to be controlled by vague sense of self-abnegation on the score of moral precontract. It could obstruct emotion, but could not quench it'. Hardy may have been drawing on Arnold's sentiments as expressed in 'Empedocles on Etna' (1852):

For, from the first faint morn
Of life, the thirst for bliss
Deep in man's heart is born;
And, sceptic as he is,

He fails not to judge clear if this be quench'd or no. (l. ii. 167-71)

Pater sees these 'irresistible natural powers' as 'indestructible' (*The Renaissance*, p. 201). By 1895, this view is betrayed: 'We said - do you remember? - that we should make a virtue of joy. I said it was Nature's intention...that we should be joyful in what instincts she afforded us - instincts which civilization had taken upon itself to thwart. And now Fate has given us this stab in the back for being such fools as to take Nature at her word!' (*JO*, 6.II).

¹³⁸ Nicolai Ryazanovskii, *The Teaching of Charles Fourier* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), p. 239.

¹³⁹ See Brian Green, 'A Sun for His Soul: Worth, Wonder, and Warmth in Hardy's Lyrics', *Colby Quarterly*, 30:2 (June 1994), 119-30.

¹⁴⁰ Emile Zola, *Abbe Mouret's Transgression*, trans. from the 34th French edn. (London, 1886), p. 26.

¹⁴¹ Anon., 'Ethics of Suicide', *Saturday Review*, XLI (June 17, 1876), 770.

¹⁴² F.A. Aulard, 'Essai sur les Idees Philosophique et L'Inspiration Poetique de Leopardi', pp. 165-6.

Her affection for him now was the breath and life of Tess's being; it enveloped her as a photosphere...A spiritual forgetfulness co-existed with an intellectual remembrance. She walked in brightness, but she knew that in the background those shapes of darkness were always spread. (*TD*, XXXI)¹⁴³

'Affection' is 'being', *esse est sentire*.¹⁴⁴

From this point on, Hardy's examination of the 'decay of the affective life' (*LN*, II, 1933)¹⁴⁵ in both an emotional and intellectual psyche is an overt prequel of Ribot's *Psychology of the Emotions* (1897). Essentially a cluster of feelings, Tess is bereft of 'life and breath' (*TD*, XXXI) when starved of passion, and her world registers the deprivation: Talbothays is Tess emotionally fulfilled; Flintcomb-Ash is Tess affectively abandoned. Conversely, when Clare is released from 'the chronic melancholy...of the civilized races' and thrown into a world proceeding from 'the pantheistic conception that impulse is the law of the universe',¹⁴⁶ he fetichistically reacquaints himself with his own essence and the emotional reality of 'the seasons in their moods...winds in their different tempers...and the voices of inanimate things' (*TD*, XVIII). Previously he has only seen life; now, through Tess, he feels it 'from its inner side' (*TD*, XXVII), yields to 'sensuous, pagan pleasure', and is hypnotized by 'the great passionate pulse of existence' (*TD*, XXV).

In 1888, reading Maudsley's *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings* (1886), Hardy noted the following:

Hallucination. - A person for the most part sees only a very small part of that which he thinks he sees, the mind contributing...what is necessary to fill up

¹⁴³ Cp. Christina Rossetti's 'Monna Innominata' (1882), in *The Poetical Works of Christina Georgina Rossetti*, ed. William Rossetti (London: Macmillan, 1928): 'I charge you at the Judgement make it plain / My love of you was life and not a breath' (no. XI, lines 13-14). Tess is a 'hunted soul' (*TD*, XLI) throughout, a possible allusion to Shelley's 'Epipsychidion' (1821) in which the idealized Emily is envisaged 'as a hunted deer that could not flee' (line 272). A more probable source is George Turberville. See Robert F. Fleissner, 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles and George Turberville', *Names*, 37:1 (March 1989), 65-8, and my 'Turberville's *Booke of Hunting* and Hardy's *Tess*: A Case of Intertextuality?', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 26 (Dec 1997), 51-67. This visual impression was bequeathed to Lawrence, Ursula's essential, vital passion revealing itself as a darkness, 'yet all the time, within the darkness she had been aware of points of light, like the eyes of wild beasts' Within 'this inner circle of light in which she lived and moved...the darkness wheeled round about, with grey shadow-shapes' (*The Rainbow* (London: Methuen, 1915; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1949), Ch. XV).

¹⁴⁴ Cp. Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*: 'In love, the reality of the species, which otherwise is only a thing of reason, an object of mere thought, becomes a matter of feeling, a truth of feeling; for in love, a man declares himself unsatisfied in his individuality taken by itself, he postulates the existence of another as a need of the heart: he reckons another as part of his own being' (Ch. XVI, p. 156). Much as Angel sees Tess as a generalized incarnation of Woman when his love is most etherealized, so Feuerbach asserts that man 'declares the life which he has through love to be the truly human life, corresponding to the idea of man, i.e., of the species. The individual is defective, imperfect, weak, needy; but love is strong...in it the self-consciousness of the individuality is the mysterious self-consciousness of the perfection of the race' (ib.). And, in a phrase especially anticipatory of Lawrence, remarks that 'man and woman are the complement of each other, and thus united they first present the species, the perfect man' (ib.). To love is to live, and to bring forth life.

¹⁴⁵ Th. Ribot, *The Psychology of the Emotions* (London, 1897). Hardy quotes extensively from pages 423-32 in the chapter on 'The Decay of the Affective Life'.

¹⁴⁶ R.H. Hutton, *TH:CA*, I, 186.

the image...Of ordinary perception it may be truly said, then, that it is in great part illusion. (*LN*, I, 1510)¹⁴⁷

Tess of the d'Urbervilles is such a mind-illusion, and the visions generated by Talbothays' natural drugs are psychedelic in the sense of mind-manifesting. The vale, exhaling a somnolent vapour, hangs 'heavy as an opiate' (*TD*, XXIII), is witnessed 'lying in a swoon' (*TD*, XXIV), and the 'languid perfume' breathed from mists, fruit and flowers guarantees a 'drowsy' (*TD*, XXVII) cephalic existence.¹⁴⁸ Hardy seizes this opportunity to stimulate altered states of consciousness, Pater's 'quickened, multiplied consciousness',¹⁴⁹ so that Tess and her world are such stuff as dreams are made of; her little life is undeniably rounded with a sleep. This suspension between un/consciousness, a time when 'our conceptions of the unknown world...grow fantastic and unsubstantial, like the shadows of the close of day',¹⁵⁰ finds an external analogy in the twilight garden where

the atmosphere [was] in such a delicate equilibrium and so transmissive that inanimate objects seemed endowed with two or three senses, if not five. There was no distinction between the near and the far. (*TD*, XIX)

Here, phenomena and their relations are not the means of expressing emotion; they *are* objects of emotion, and the episode is a symbolic rendering of 'the thing which is beyond, suspected, &...supposed rather than perceived, vaguely felt by its effects rather than in itself, & rather than thought' (*LN*, I, 1640).¹⁵¹ The experience, a graphic distillation of Tess's felt knowledge of reality, is conveyed in images which, because of their affective

¹⁴⁷ Maudsley, *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings*, pp. 188-9.

¹⁴⁸ It is highly probable that Hardy owes something to Tennyson's 'The Lotus-Eaters' (1842), in *The Complete Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1898), for this opiate-induced reverie. The atmosphere of the Vale is as heavy as that rolling along the shore: 'All round the coast the languid air did swoon, / Breathing like one that hath a weary dream' (lines 5-6). There are several correlations: the sailors are 'deep-asleep...yet all awake' (line 35), the land is saturated with 'sweet music' where 'long-leaved flowers weep' ('Choric Song', I, 1, 10), and life here offers the weary soul an existence 'With half-shut eyes ever to seem / Falling asleep in a half-dream!' (V, 55-6). On the other hand sits Mortimer Collins's unimpressed 'Lotus Eating' (1855), in *Victorian Verse*, ed. Christopher Ricks (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987):

Who would care to pass his life away
Of the Lotus-land a dreamful denizen -
Lotus-islands in a waveless bay,

Sung by Alfred Tennyson? (lines 1-4)

Christina Rossetti's 'The Lotus-Eaters' (1847) records a rather more ominous landscape: 'A dark cloud overhangs their land / Like a mighty hand, / Never moving from above it' (lines 7-9), but the obligatory poppy appears as the soothing rhythms of the final octave lull away all cares.

¹⁴⁹ Pater, *The Renaissance*, p. 238.

¹⁵⁰ Stephen, 'Dreams and Realities', p. 86.

¹⁵¹ Brunetiere, 'Symbolistes et Decadents', pp. 219-23.

appeal, spontaneously excite the original feeling, and as dream passes into hallucination it 'supplies new symbols for the emotions'.¹⁵²

Tess senses the moment in a subjective yet sexual way,¹⁵³ the latent eroticism emanating from the details themselves, from the notes which, formerly 'dim, flattened, constrained by their confinement' in the attic, 'had never appealed to her as now, when they wandered in the still air with a stark quality like that of nudity' (*TD*, XIX).¹⁵⁴ Now we go beyond the purely visual, beyond Tess's own consciousness even, to an ultra reality which impresses her emotions, for this hypnotic dream-world is wider, more comprehensive and more harmonious than the everyday waking world.¹⁵⁵ As the music invades the soundlessness, the detached narrative eye perceives the substance, a badly played tune; Tess's interior perspective provides the essential commentary, a transcendental harmony. And as the Symbolist intention is to excite 'a "state of the soul" analogous to that in which music puts us' (*LN*, I, 1640),¹⁵⁶ Tess's climactic explosion is objectified through Apollo's poetical appropriation of the Dionysian preserve:

Tess was conscious of neither time nor space...She undulated upon the thin notes of the second-hand harp, and their harmonies passed like breezes through her, bringing tears into her eyes. The floating pollen seemed to be his notes made visible, and the dampness of the garden the weeping of the garden's sensibility...Weed-flowers glowed as if they would not close

¹⁵² Stephen, 'Dreams and Realities', p. 106.

¹⁵³ See Rosemarie Morgan, *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), esp. pp. 86-8; Boumelha, *Thomas Hardy and Women*, esp. pp. 117-34. Tess's actual progress through this quasi-Eden almost certainly owes something to Gaskell's *Ruth* (1853), ed. Alan Shelston (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). The heroine, liable to fits of 'passionate emotion' like her successor, travels back to her parental home with Bellingham, and enters the garden. He somewhat voyeuristically watches her suggestive experience of it: 'she wandered among the flowers...She wound in and out in natural, graceful, wavy lines between the luxuriant and overgrown shrubs, which were fragrant...; she went on, careless of watching eyes, indeed unconscious, for the time, of their existence. Once she stopped to take hold of a spray of jessamine, and softly kiss it' (Ch. IV). A year later, Dickens makes more insidious use of the image in *Hard Times* (1854), ed. Paul Schlicke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). Mrs Sparsit, spying on Louisa and Harthouse during a storm, creeps through a wood for a better view, heedless of long grass and briars: of worms, snails, and slugs, and all creeping things that be...Mrs Sparsit softly crushed her way through the thick undergrowth...Bending low among the dewy grass, Mrs Sparsit advanced closer to them (2. XI). The method was, no doubt, one which successfully got sex past the censors. As Kevin Padian, "'A Daughter of the Soil': Themes of Deep Time and Evolution in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*", *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XIII: 3 (Oct 1997), 65-81, notes, 'Fertility runs through Hardy's novels', and in *TD* in particular 'the sense of sex, of ripeness, of the urge to procreate, is nearly overwhelming at every turn in the early part of the novel... The novel is full of descriptions of the fertility of Nature, with ploughings, matings, plants in flower all over' (p. 72).

¹⁵⁴ Cp. Oaks' flute: 'The tune was not floating unhindered into the open air: it seemed muffled in some way' (*FMC*, II). In the later case, as in the dancing of Eustacia, Wildeve, and the Trantridge revellers, Hardy seems to be exploring the daemonic/erotic connection between music and possession. Hardy's poems and short stories are peopled by fiddlers who either act as observers or become daemons themselves (see 'The Fiddler' (*CP*, 207)). Carline Aspent is possessed by Mop Ollamoor, the daemonic *Fiddler of the Reels*, as a result of his bewitching music, and the couples dancing in *The History of the Hardcomes* change their partner's for life as a consequence of the enchanting power of music.

¹⁵⁵ 'Suppose that in hypnotism, madness or dream, my world becomes wider and more harmonious than the scheme which is set up from my normal self - then does not...what I dream become at once a world better and more real?' (Bradley, 'On my Real World', in *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 464). Bradley's argument in this essay centres around an interrogation of the mere assumption that our waking world has a sole or superior reality...on the assumption that our "real" world of fact is the one reality' (p. 465).

¹⁵⁶ Cp. Pater: 'All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music' (*The Renaissance*, p. 135). Hardy noted this phrase in 1891: *LN*, II, 1864. See also *LN*, II, 2231: 'the whole meaning of music depends upon this immediate appeal to our emotions through the association of feeling with sensation' (Untitled, periodical, XXI (March 1903), 9).

for intentness, and the waves of colour mixed with the waves of sound.
(TD, XIX)¹⁵⁷

As sights and sounds dissolve and recompose, Hardy seems to be expressing through Tess his response to Feuerbach's question, 'And what else is the power of melody but the power of feeling? Music is the language of feeling; melody is audible feeling - feeling communicating itself'.¹⁵⁸ In the space of a few fluid lines, the reader has been removed, along with Tess, several layers from the level of surface consciousness and external reality. Tess's unthinking reaction, 'a matter of pure perception' with an 'untranslatable order of impressions',¹⁵⁹ brings her to complete sensual fulfilment, a kind of religious and sexual rapture, 'her cheeks on fire', and though her unconsciousness requires the narrator's additional perspective, the two are not synonymous. The omniscient eye is fascinated by the attractively 'offensive',¹⁶⁰ sexual reality which does not register with the subject herself. Metaphorical analogy is the only option,¹⁶¹ but Tess, having surpassed such metaphysical suggestiveness, sets herself aside and enters that

...serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on, -
Until...
...we are la d asleep
In body, and become a living soul.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁷ Hardy may have had Bernini's sculpture, 'The Ecstasy of Saint Theresa' (Tess's full name), at the back of his mind here. There may also be a debt to George Eliot's myth of Theresa of Avila in the prelude to *Middlemarch*; see Kevin Z. Moore, *The Descent of the Imagination: Postromantic Culture in the Later Novels of Thomas Hardy* (London and New York: New York University Press, 1990), pp. 171-3. See also Patricia K. Manzzer, 'In Some Old Book, Somebody Just Like Me': Eliot's *Tessa* and Hardy's *Tess*', *English Language Notes*, 33:3 (1996), 33-8, which suggests the influence of *Romola*. Cp. the effect Manston's playing on his organ has on Cytherea: 'The power of the music did not show itself so much by attracting her attention to the subject of the piece, as by taking up and developing as its libretto the poem of her own life and soul.' Even the physical ecstasy is the same: 'impulses of thought came with new harmonies, and entered into her with a gnawing thrill' (DR, 8.4). Carline's reactions to Mop Ollamoor are similar, her experience of the music's 'wild and extravagant sweetness...projecting through her nerves excruciating spasms, a sort of blissful torture' ('The Fiddler of the Reels', in *The Distracted Preacher and Other Tales*, ed. Susan Hill (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), p. 300). The 'waves of colour' are undoubtedly predicated upon Lewes who discusses not only 'undulations...in colour' but describes its 'wave-movement'. Moreover, 'the specific sensation of colour...is a purely subjective state' ('The Course of Modern Thought', p. 320).

It is interesting to note Angel's resemblance to Pater's Apollo who arrives annually 'singing his way from farm to farm, to the sound of his harp' (*Miscellaneous Studies* (1895, 2nd edn.; rpt. London: Macmillan, 1904), p. 152). Angel also does 'the round' of the farms with his 'old harp' (TD, XIX), and just as the pollen seems to be visible music, so Pater uses the phrase 'notes made visible' twice in 'Apollo in Arcady' (pp. 145, 154). Similarly, where Angel 'can raise up dreams with your music, and drive all...horrid fancies away!' (TD, XIX), so Apollo 'charmed away other people's maladies', especially those of 'the troubled sleeper' (p. 155). The Apollo correlation becomes explicit later on.

¹⁵⁸ Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, Ch. I: 1, pp. 3-4. He continues, 'If thou hast no sensibility, no feeling for music, thou perceivest in the finest music nothing more than in the wind which rushes past thy feet. What, then, is it which acts on thee when thou art affected by melody? What dost thou perceive in it? What else than the voice of thy own heart? Feeling speaks only to feeling; feeling is comprehensible only by feeling, that is, by itself - for this reason, that the object of feeling is nothing else than feeling. Music is the monologue of emotion' (Ch. I: 1, p. 9).

¹⁵⁹ Pater, *The Renaissance*, p. 139.

¹⁶⁰ Tess's progress through the 'cracking snails...thistle-milk and slug-slime' is borrowed from the passage in Keats's *Endymion* (1818) where the poet advises that identity comes only if we 'wipe away all slime / Left by men-slugs and human serpentry' (Book I, lines 820-1). And Angel's harp provides that 'music's kiss' which 'impregnates the free winds' (Book I, 784) as it will Tess.

¹⁶¹ On the same theme, see Pamela Dalziel, 'Hardy's Sexual Evasions: The Evidence of the "Studies, Specimens, &c" Notebook', *Victorian Poetry*, 31:2 (Summer 1993), 143-55.

¹⁶² Wordsworth, 'Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey' (1798), lines 36-7, 41-3, 45-6.

And it is her harmonizing eye, empowered by 'joy', which 'sees into the life of things'.¹⁶³

Tess has vision, imagination, and, using the impressions of her soul's infinite perceptivity,¹⁶⁴ creates actualities, for, as Stephen appreciated, 'the plastic world of the imagination yields to every passionate longing...Pure emotion knows no limits',¹⁶⁵ and for Emerson, 'all objects shrink and expand to serve the passions of the poet' who sees nature as 'fluid, and impresses his being thereon'.¹⁶⁶ Tess is indeed one of those poet-seers who, for J.S. Mill, 'are so constituted, that emotions are the links of association by which their ideas, both sensuous and spiritual, are connected together'.¹⁶⁷ Tess *sees* poetry, too. Her natural, rather than cultural 'impressions are vivid and intense',¹⁶⁸ and her affective associations perceive an overall unity or coherence: the moment's 'wholeness' or 'aesthetic congruity' lies in 'singleness of expression'.¹⁶⁹ To justify the creation of an aesthetic totality, Mill replaces the associationists' determining design¹⁷⁰ with a determining feeling:

Where...nature has given strong feelings...the prevailing associations will be those which connect objects and ideas with emotions...At the centre of each group of thoughts or images will be found a feeling; and the thoughts or images are only there because the feeling was there. All the combinations

¹⁶³ Ibid., line 48. Although the following phrase from Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity* has been taken out of its immediate context, it seems to offer an interesting comment on this garden section: 'Feeling is a dream with the eyes open; religion the dream of waking consciousness: dreaming is the key to the mysteries of religion' (Ch. XV, p. 141).

¹⁶⁴ Or 'the soul's sphere of infinite images' (Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'The Soul's Sphere', no. LXII in *The House of Life* series, line 8). Cp. Wordsworth's 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality' (1802-6):

...nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!...
Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither. (lines 135-6, 166-8)

She is 'the pure spirit' of Shelley's *Adonais* (1821) which unconsciously desires to flow
Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
Through time and change, unquenchably the same. (XXXVIII. 338-40)

Cp. Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*: 'if thou feelest the infinite, thou feelest and affirmest the infinitude of the power of feeling' (Ch. I: 1, p. 9).

¹⁶⁵ Stephen, *Dreams and Realities*, p. 110.

¹⁶⁶ Ralph Waldo Emerson, 'Nature' (1832), in *Works of Emerson*, 12 vols (New York: AMS Press, 1968), I, 7-77 (p. 52).

¹⁶⁷ Mill, 'The Two Kinds of Poetry', in *Early Essays*, pp. 221-36 (pp. 223).

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 225. Mill's definition of essential "poetry" is something which can exist in 'visible' as well as 'audible symbols' through 'the language of sculpture, painting, and architecture' ('What is Poetry?', p. 201).

¹⁶⁹ Mill, 'What is Poetry?', in *Early Essays*, p. 215.

¹⁷⁰ Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* was obviously not available to Mill in 1833, but his associationist theory is sufficiently contemporaneous with *TD* to merit consideration, especially in the context of this garden scene: 'In every psychical state we have to do with two sides, though we disregard one. Thus in the "Association of Ideas" we have no right to forget that there is a physical sequence essentially concerned. And the law of Association must itself be extended, to take in connections formed between physical and psychical elements' ('Body and Soul', in *Appearance and Reality*, p. 335). Thus Tess's mental / visionary ecstasy has its physical / prosaic equivalent: tears and a flushed face. It is also possible that Hardy may have been thinking of Bain's considerable interrogation of the laws of association in *The Senses and the Intellect*, espec. Chs. III: 'Compound Association', and IV: 'Constructive Association' of the section on *Intellect*. In the Preface to the First Edition, Bain explains that the exposition of the *Intellect* 'proceeds entirely on the Laws of Association, which are exemplified with minute detail'.

which the mind puts together, all...the wholes which Imagination constructs ...will be indebted to some dominant *feeling*, not as in other natures to a dominant *thought*, for their unity and consistency of character.¹⁷¹

There is a preordained correspondence between certain colours, forms, emotions and sounds, and Hardy, through Tess, weaves a coherent, felt vision from this symbolic language. After all, 'poetry is feeling...embodying itself in symbols, which are the nearest possible representations of the feeling in the exact shape in which it exists in the poet's mind.'¹⁷² Coleridge's defence of the obscurity of Wordsworth's 'Immortality Ode' is applicable in this context:

[It] was intended for such readers only as had been accustomed to watch the flux and reflux of their inmost nature, to venture at times into the twilight realms of consciousness, and to feel a deep interest in modes of inmost being, to which they know that the attributes of time and space are inapplicable and alien, but which yet cannot be conveyed, save in symbols of time and space.¹⁷³

Tess's visionary abstraction fuses image and idea: it is imaginative emotionalism at its most graphic, inspired poetry induced by a spiritualized music capable, as Keble says, of 'piercing into, and drawing out to the light, the secrets of the soul.'¹⁷⁴ Hardy's equation of music and deep passion directs his characters to respond to music in the same way as Hoffmann for whom it gave 'not only an emotional release and exaltation but a secret language of the beyond, a door to the supernatural and divine'.¹⁷⁵ And his most sensitive protagonists have yet another access to this passionate Soul via 'the creative imagination of the poet and the unconscious workings of our dream life'.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷¹ Mill, 'The Two Kinds of Poetry', in *Early Essays*, p. 225.

¹⁷² Mill, 'What is Poetry?', in *Early Essays*, pp. 208-9.

¹⁷³ S.T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (1817), ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, vol VII of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn, 16 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), VII (ii), Ch. XXII, pp. 119-59 (p. 147). See Terence Wright, 'Space, Time, and Paradox: The Sense of History in Hardy's Last Novels', *Essays and Studies*, 44 (1991), 41-52.

¹⁷⁴ John Keble, *Lectures on Poetry* (1832-41), trans. E.K. Francis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912), I, 48. Music drags Tess's soul from her body in a manner similar to Carline's discovery that Mop Ollamoor's fiddle has the power to 'draw you soul out of your body like a spider's thread' ('The Fiddler of the Reels', p. 290).

¹⁷⁵ Rene Wellek's Foreword in *Selected Writings of E.T.A. Hoffmann*, ed. and trans. L.J. Kent and E.C. Knight (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), I, 2. Hardy makes one reference to Hoffmann in connection with a list of other writers of 'Modern German Literature' (LN, I, 1338). See also John Marks, 'Hardy's Fugal Qualities', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XII:2 (May 1996), 45-7. Hardy's poem, 'In a Museum', uses the fugue as the central figure. Taken from the Latin, *fuga*, 'a running away', it is employed in both its musical and psychiatric sense. By combining these meanings, Hardy's musico-psychical fugue describes 'a dreamlike state of consciousness, during which a person may wander far away from present circumstances' (p. 45). Hardy seems to have the same idea in mind during the garden scene.

¹⁷⁶ Wellek's Foreword in *Selected Writings of E.T.A. Hoffmann*, I, 2.

Thus Tess, the poet, is a variation on the Aeolian harp, allowing unseen agencies to draw music from her.¹⁷⁷

Shelley's allusion to this instrument - whose music comes from Nature rather than Art - supplies an appropriate analogy, concept and expression being close enough to imply that Hardy leant on the 'Defence', consciously or otherwise:

Man is an instrument over which a series of external and internal impressions are driven, like the alternations of an ever-changing wind over an Aeolian lyre, which move it by their motion to ever-changing melody. But there is a principle within the human being...which acts otherwise than in the lyre, and produces not melody alone, but harmony, by an internal adjustment of the sounds or motions thus excited to the impressions which excite them.¹⁷⁸

Shelley's theory becomes Hardy's practice, for when the subject 'expresses the emotions produced in him by surrounding objects...language and gesture...become the image of the combined effect of those objects, and his apprehension of them'.¹⁷⁹ Here, Tess is the lyre, her harmonizing vision the poem, and 'there is a latent music in the sincere utterance of deep emotion, however expressed, which fills the place of actual word-music in rhythmic phraseology on thinner emotive subjects' (*LY*, p. 92; March 1902). So intense is the experience that Tess's mind, 'like [a] half-aroused sleeper', is 'unable to distinguish between dreams and perceived realities',¹⁸⁰ but a bond wrought by passion exists between natural events and her private world, and, once the music is fled, one may well wonder whether it was a vision, or a waking dream. Does Tess wake or sleep?¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ 'It is noteworthy, however, that not until the nineteenth century did the wind-harp become an analogy for the poetic mind as well as a subject for poetic description' (M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 51. See Coleridge's 'The Eolian Harp' (1795), particularly lines 17-19, and 'The Snowdrop' (1800): 'The music hovers half-perceiv'd, / And only moulds the slumberer's dreams' (lines 61-2), in *Coleridge: Poetical Works*, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: Oxford University Press, 1969). See Carlyle's reference to 'the wail of Aeolian harps' in 'Lecture III: The Hero as Poet', in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, & the Heroic in History* (1841), intro. Michael K. Goldberg (Oxford and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 67-97 (p. 81).

¹⁷⁸ P.B. Shelley, 'Defence of Poetry', in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. Donald H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers (New York: Norton, 1977), pp. 478-508 (p. 480).

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 481.

¹⁸⁰ Stephen, 'Dreams and Realities', p. 86. Mill also notes 'the capacity of distinguishing whether that of which the mind is conscious be an eternal truth, or but a dream' ('The Two Kinds of Poetry', in *Early Essays*, p. 222), and Bradley was later to assert that 'the gulf fixed between imaginary and real existence, however useful and necessary it may be, is at once arbitrary and novel' ('On Floating Ideas and the Imaginary', in *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 47).

¹⁸¹ Cp. Napoleon: 'Am I awake, / Or is this all a dream? - Ah, no. Too real!' (*D*, 3. III. v). Bradley's thoughts, though unavailable to Hardy at this time, are pertinent, and illustrate the extent to which the puzzle continued into the twentieth century: 'There is an old familiar doubt as to dream and waking. A man is led at times to ask whether his real life may not be a dream and his dreams reality' ('On my Real World', in *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 460). Hardy may also have been familiar with Christina Rossetti's sentiments in 'A Ballad of Bodin' (c. 1880): 'There are sleeping dreams and waking dreams; / What seems is not always as it seems' (lines 1-2).

This beatific episode, so vivid that it elicits, in Hazlitt's words, 'an involuntary movement of imagination and passion',¹⁸² grants Tess her autonomy, but the second affective assault, controlled by Clare's eyes, damages her as subject and originates from an idealizing (intellectual) not a naturalizing (emotional) realm. The dawn meeting in the meadow is veiled in a 'mixed, singular, luminous gloom', the garden's tangible reality dissolving into a 'spectral, half-compounded...preternatural...mist stratum' (*TD*, XX). The diffused 'woolly' light has about it a 'visionary' transparency,¹⁸³ a mysterious mesmeric quality that translates the vista into 'a landscape *plus* a [wo]man's soul' (*EL*, p. 283; Jan 1889).¹⁸⁴ Yet Apollo's Meadow is companion to Dionysus's Chase. There, Tess is a spirit desecrated by the flesh; here, Angel betrays her identity in an Adamic misnaming,¹⁸⁵ and her body in a spiritual outrage: 'She looked ghostly, as if she were merely a soul at large...She was no longer the milkmaid, but a visionary essence of woman - a whole sex condensed into one typical form' (*TD*, XX). The phraseology resembles Zola's *Abbet Mouret* (1886)¹⁸⁶ and anticipates the Jungian *anima*: 'A collective image of woman exists in a man's unconscious, with the help of which he apprehends the nature of

¹⁸² William Hazlitt, *Complete Works*, ed. P.P. Howe, 21 vols (London and Toronto: Dent, 1930-34), V, 1.

¹⁸³ Cp. Wordsworth: 'Vapours exhaling from the lakes and meadows after sunrise, in a hot season, or, in moist weather, brooding upon the heights, or descending towards the valleys with inaudible motion, give a visionary character to everything around them; and are in themselves...beautiful' ('Description of the Scenery of the Lakes', in *A Guide Through the District of the Lakes in the North of England* (5th edn., 1835), in *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. W.J.B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, 3 vols (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1974), II, 170-193 (pp. 190-1).

¹⁸⁴ Cp. 'Landscape...can only move us much when the spectator's soul feels that the artist's soul is speaking through the forms & colours of his canvas' (*LN*, 1491; Francis Turner Palgrave, 'The Decline of Art', *Nineteenth Century*, XXIII (Jan 1, 1888), p. 88). Hardy's note, alluding to Turner, may owe something to Mill's observations: 'One of Turner's views is not a mere copy from nature...Turner...unites the objects of the given landscape with whatever sky, and whatever light and shade, enable those particular objects to impress the imagination most strongly...[T]here is creative art - not working after an actual model, but realizing an idea' ('What is Poetry?', in *Early Essays*, p. 212).

¹⁸⁵ He calls her 'Artemis, Demeter, and other fanciful names, which she did not like because she did not understand them' (*TD*, XX). For an instructive discussion of these Classical allusions, see G. Glen Wickens, 'Hardy and the Aesthetic Mythographers: The Myth of Demeter + Persephone in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 53 (1983), 85-106. Her 'poor wounded name' is taken to heart by Hardy. (See Annie Ramel, 'Poor Wounded Name': Le Nom Blessé dans *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *Études Anglaises*, 44:4 (Oct-Dec 1991), 386-98.) In the version which appeared in the *National Observer*, Tess has no name and is referred to throughout by Alec as 'my beauty' and 'my Big Beauty', and by the narrator as Beauty. Arnold, citing Keats, emphasizes how he was mastered by 'the mighty abstract idea of Beauty in all things...I have loved the principle of beauty in all things' ('Keats', in *Essays in Criticism: Second Series* (London: Macmillan, 1895), pp. 100-21 (p. 116)), as, it seems, was Hardy at this point. It is also interesting that Ruth's seducer, Bellingham (like d'Urberville, from the upper-class), regards her in the same way: 'Her beauty was all that Mr Bellingham cared for, and it was supreme. It was all he recognized of her, and he was proud of it. She stood in her white dress against the trees...her face was flushed' (*Ruth* (1853), Ch. VI). There are numerous similarities between both novels. Though the novel as it stands finds Tess misnamed by others' desires, she does assert the right to name herself: 'Call me Tess' (*TD*, XX), she tells Angel. The title problematizes this concern over identity in its initial particularization of the secondary generalization.

¹⁸⁶ For the influence of this novel, which Hardy read in 1886/7, see Bjork's remarks in *LN*, '1867' NB, entry 187 n., and entries 180-208. See also D.G. Mason, 'Hardy and Zola: A Comparative Study of *Tess* and *Abbe Mouret*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, VII:3 (Oct 1991), 89-102. In his introduction to Zola's novel (London: Chatto & Windus, 1900), Vizetely explains that 'Albine, if more or less unreal, a phantasm, the spirit as it were of nature incarnate in womanhood, is the ideal, the very quintessence of woman' (p. ix). Trevor Johnson, "'But a Perfunctory Attention?'" Hardy as Modern Linguist and Translator', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XII:3 (Oct 1996), 69-78, refers to this correlation (p. 73) in arguing that Hardy had a far from facile involvement with contemporary foreign languages. Roger Ebbatson, 'Hardy and Zola Revisited', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XIII:1 (Feb 1997), 83, also forwards Zola's *La Bête Humaine*, published in book form in March 1890, as a possible influence.

woman',¹⁸⁷ and although this image may correspond 'to the deepest reality in man',¹⁸⁸ its unconscious projection in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* proves disastrous because it is narcissistically motivated. Hardy, like Jung, emphasizes the importance of recognizing the subjective derivation of the *anima*; only then will the woman be loved objectively. But in this pre-dawn apotheosis, Tess is the ethereal phenomenon that Angel's spirituality craves.¹⁸⁹ His 'concreting the abstract' promises calamity, for 'the more we analyse or decompose concrete objects into the abstract qualities that make them up, the more difficult it is to remount to the concrete'.¹⁹⁰ For Angel it proves impossible.

Tess's shifting reality, dependent on the emotions she arouses in others, reflects Hardy's contemporary analysis of Renaissance art: 'In a Botticelli the soul is outside the body, permeating its spectator with its emotions. In a Reubens the flesh is without, and the soul (possibly) within' (*EL*, p. 285; March 1889).¹⁹¹ Alec's Reubens is superseded by Angel's Botticelli; Tess's Tess is both.¹⁹² Over a quarter of a century before, Hardy identified 'an attitude...in which the soul...especially of the woman, dominates outwardly and expresses its presence so strongly, that the intangible essence seems more apparent than the body itself' (*DR*, 13.7). The 'burning sensibility' of his current 'soul at large' is most affective and creative when semi-conscious, a state which also abandons her to the dangers of masculine voyeurism,¹⁹³ and as Tess's essence, bodied forth, 'breathes' from her, she is beheld in a reverie by Clare:

¹⁸⁷ Jung, *Two Essays in Analytical Psychology*, in *Collected Works*, VII, 188.

¹⁸⁸ Jung, *Aion*, in *Collected Works*, IX (ii), 13.

¹⁸⁹ Angel's urge is to construct Tess from figures borrowed from Nature, but it is the Art of Nature (from a cultural point of view) which he enforces upon her. See Janice M. Allan, 'The Art of Nature: A Study of Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 22 (Winter 1996), 28-33.

¹⁹⁰ Bain, 'Concreting the Abstract', in *The Senses and the Intellect*, pp. 622-4 (p. 624).

¹⁹¹ See the argument forwarded by Robert Browning's 'Fra Lippo Lippi' (1855), in *The Poetical Works of Robert Browning* (London: Oxford University Press, 1905; rpt. 1962). His critics tell him,

'Your business is to paint the souls of men...

Give us no more of body than shows soul!...

Paint the soul, never mind the legs and arms!' (lines 183, 188, 193)

But the Brother knows that a painter can only paint the soul well by first painting the body well. 'The eye can't stop there' on the surface (line 200). He has learned 'The value and significance of flesh' (line 268).

¹⁹² See Maggie Humm, 'Gender and Narrative in Thomas Hardy', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 11 (1984), 41-8. Hardy apparently creates a plot which pits male expectation and attitudes against female images, the result being 'the physical or mental destruction of women'. Both contingencies are realized in *TD*. See also David Hume, *Hume's Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding, and Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1748, 1750), ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894): 'is there any principle in all nature more mysterious than the union of body with soul...?' (p. 65).

¹⁹³ On the masculine/feminine gaze in conjunction with photography in literature, see Julie Grossman, 'Hardy's Tess and the Photograph: Images to Die For', *Criticism*, 35 (Fall 1993), 609-30; Jeff Nunokawa, 'Tess, Tourism, and the Spectacle of the Woman', in *Rewriting the Victorians: Theory History and the Politics of Gender*, ed. Linda Shires (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 70-86.

It was a moment when a woman's soul is more incarnate than at any other time; when the most spiritless beauty bespeaks itself flesh; and sex takes the outside place in the presentation. (*TD*, XXVII)¹⁹⁴

Nowhere does Coleridge's 'Body Imaging Soul' (1810) find more complete expression:

The body
Eternal Shadow of the finite Soul /
The Souls' self-symbol / its image of itself,
Its own yet not itself -¹⁹⁵

Questions raised at such moments confront the ultimate role and desirability of the emotions, and, with typical inconsistency, Hardy assimilates two contending philosophies to illustrate the confusion. He repeats Comte's theory that 'feeling' exists as 'the great motor force of human life' (*LN*, I, 666)¹⁹⁶ and agrees with Fourier's location of these 'motive springs of life' in 'the passions and attractions of the soul',¹⁹⁷ but whereas Comte sees man's affective needs becoming 'dynamically spiritualized', Fourier sees them becoming 'progressively sensuous'.¹⁹⁸ Hardy incarnates each concept in Clare and Alec and unifies them in Tess, her sensuous spiritualism having more integrity and significance than either isolated element. The potency of this combined force coruscates throughout the novel, and through Tess, 'a vessel of emotions' living in 'a highly-charged mental atmosphere' (*TD*, XXXIII), Hardy evolves the metaphor of impassioned expression. The antithesis of the containing cistern, she is a Romantic fountain - 'her feelings almost filled her ears like a babble of waves, and surged up to her eyes' (*TD*, XXXI) - an organic variation on Comte's technically-phrased 'motor force', a living generator and conductor of emotions which are earthed to materialize as external phenomena.

¹⁹⁴ Fourteen years later, Oscar Wilde was to write that 'Truth in art is the unity of a thing with itself: the outward rendered expressive of the inward: the soul made incarnate: the body instinct with spirit' (*De Profundis* (1905; London: Methuen & Co., 1949), p. 89).

¹⁹⁵ See also Coleridge's 'Phantom' (1834) which usually follows 'Phantom or Fact. A Dialogue in Verse' (1828). Each poem is 'a fragment from the life of dreams', or rather 'a record from the dream of life' (lines 18, 20); but it was the reality which lay behind both 'phantom' and 'fact' of which the poet dreamed, having his eyes open. Cp. the climax of the confession scene:

'I repeat, the woman I have been loving is not you.'

'But who?'

'Another woman in your shape.' (*TD*, XXXV)

with the awareness of a perceptual dislocation in 'Phantom or Fact':

Alas! that change how fain would I forget!...

'Twas all another, feature, look and frame,

And still, methought, I knew, it was the same! (lines 8, 11-2)

¹⁹⁶ Comte, *System of Positive Polity*, III, 353.

¹⁹⁷ Charles Fourier, *The Passions of the Human Soul*, I, 9. Wordsworth also addresses directly 'The passions that build up our human soul' which purify 'The elements of feeling and of thought' ('Influence of Natural Objects' (1809), lines 7, 11; *The Prelude*, I, 407. See also Bradley: 'The soul...is a feeling whole' ('Body and Soul', in *Appearance and Reality*, Ch. XXIII, pp. 295-358 (p. 302)).

¹⁹⁸ Manuel, *The Prophets of Paris*, p. 321.

Tess may personify an imaginative reconciliation of the scientific and emotional, but the repercussions are crushing. In the years dividing *The Woodlanders* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Hardy began to feel the insufficiency of Huxley's and Spencer's theories; Arnold's ideologies, focusing on the distressing exigencies of modernism, particularly alienation and self-dissociation, were more appropriate. In the 1860s, seeing that men needed to be happy, Arnold tried to configure a positive foundation for contemporary intellectual life, and announced the poet's duty to lift mankind on 'One common wave of thought and joy',¹⁹⁹ but during the late 1880s and early 1890s, Hardy began revising and correcting Arnold's former positivism by challenging the joyful with the "aching wave". By 1902 he concluded that 'pain has been, and pain is: no new sort of morals in Nature can remove pain from the past and make it a pleasure for those who are its infallible estimators' (*LY*, p. 97; May 1902).²⁰⁰

But the boundary is uncomfortably blurred; ambiguous torment underpins all emotions, and the delicious agony of the maids' 'hopeless passion' for Clare is conceived as a palpable, atmospheric presence, a veritable 'disease of feeling'. 'They writhed feverishly under the oppressiveness of an emotion thrust upon them by cruel Nature's law - an emotion which they had neither expected nor desired', but the exquisite intensity of the sensation is all, 'ecstacizing them to a killing joy' (*TD*, XXIII).²⁰¹ In such a keenly-felt existence, life and death throes are synonymous, as Tess understands when she encounters the pheasants, 'some pulsating quickly...all of them writhing in agony' (*TD*, XLI). Biological forces are anything but a blessing, and the aftermath of 'drifting into acquiescence' (*TD*, XXVIII) with the most peremptory of physical needs discloses a grotesque wrenching and re/de-forming of reality.

The confession scene,²⁰² a graphic rendition of Angel's visual de/reconstruction of Tess, exemplifies Hardy's phenomenological approach. The 'large shadow' (*TD*,

¹⁹⁹ Arnold, 'Obermann Once More' (1865/7), lines 323-4.

²⁰⁰ Cp. Bradley: 'Take, for instance, some slight pain. We may have been feeling, in our dimmest and most inward recesses, uneasy and discomposed; and, so soon as this disturbing feature is able to be noticed, we at once react against it. The disquieting sensation becomes clearly a not-self, which we desire to remove' ('The Meanings of Self', in *Appearance and Reality*, p. 91).

²⁰¹ See Richard D. McOhee, "'Swinburne Planteth, Hardy Watereth': Victorian Views of Pain and Pleasure in Human Sexuality", in *Sexuality and Victorian Literature*, Tennessee Studies in Literature, vol. 27, ed. Don R. Cox (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984). For Hardy's most extreme example of sadomasochism, see 'Barbara of the House of Grebe'. Cp. Byron's contention that 'the great object of life is sensation - to feel that we exist, even though in pain' (*Byron's Letters and Journals*, ed. Leslie A. Marchand, 11 vols (London: John Murray, 1973), Sept 6, 1813; I, 108-10 (p. 109)).

²⁰² See Beth Kalikoff, 'Victorian Sexual Confession', *Victorians Institute Journal*, 18 (1990), 99-112; Jeanette Shumaker, 'Breaking

XXIV) of her figure cast by the apocalyptic fire is both a prefiguring and a projection of this distorted view, its meaning relying entirely on the emotional response evinced by certain images, and in this respect, memory is crucial, the sensed dislocation emanating from the disharmony between past (subjective) and present (objective) impressions. Thus, whereas Tess has been beautified by nature's jewels, 'minute diamonds of moisture' hanging upon her 'like seed pearls' (*TD*, XX) or 'crystals' (*TD*, XXXI), society's artificial alternatives are emotionally repellent. The gems' 'sinister wink like a toad's' (*TD*, XXXIV) prepares the way for the awful reversal of Clare's preconception of his beloved, and the progress of her narrative is matched by the hardening cynicism of the listener in material terms:

The complexion even of external things seemed to suffer transmutation...
[T]he fire in the grate looked impish - demonically funny...The fender
grinned idly...All material objects announced their irresponsibility...And
yet nothing had changed...or rather, nothing in the substance of things.
But the essence of things had changed. (*TD*, XXV)

Clare's emotional prostration condenses around things which function as a mimetic chorus, the objects' terrible aloofness subverting the absurd tragedy of the couple's dilemma, while their fantastic metamorphosis parodies that undergone by Tess - to Angel's eyes, at least. Angel's vocalization of their mute symbolism recognizes the horrid extravagance of the present reality:

'My God - how can forgiveness meet such a grotesque -
prestidigitation as that!'
He paused, contemplating his definition; then suddenly broke into
horrible laughter - as unnatural and ghastly as a laugh in hell. (ib.)²⁰³

One detail struck a contemporary reviewer as 'a crudity in art, though it may be a fact in nature'.²⁰⁴ After the confession, Tess is whitened with terror, 'and her mouth had the aspect of a little round hole'. Watson objects to the too-true dimension:

with Convention: Victorian Confession Novels and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *English Literature in Transition*, 37:4 (1994), 445-62; William Bannell, 'Broken Communion in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *English Language Notes*, 31:4 (1994), 63-71; Jan-Pawel Jedrzejewski, 'Thomas Hardy and Catholicism', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, IX:1 (Feb 1993), 27-40.

²⁰³ For a brief recapitulation of ambiguous laughter in the novels, see n. 210 in the chapter on *JO*.

²⁰⁴ William Watson, *Academy*, XLI (Feb 6, 1892), 125-6; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 192-9 (I, 195).

This may be realism, but even realism is eclectic, and rejects more than it uses; and this is surely one of those non-essential touches which, drawing attention upon themselves, purchase a literal veracity at the expense of a high imaginative verisimilitude.²⁰⁵

But this is precisely the point. The objects' transubstantiation is far removed from 'literal veracity', and this makes such strategies all the more disturbing; just as the apparent transformations trace the impressiveness and oppressiveness of the emotional ambience, so this stark figure is hideous in its exclusivity. An inexpressible feeling is communicated through an image which refines an abysmal silence,²⁰⁶ and it is ultimately left to the reader to interpret the connection between sign and significance. Angel's own emotional break-down is treated with similar 'non-essential', visual symbolism: 'She hardly observed that a tear descended slowly upon his cheek, a tear so large that it magnified the pores of his skin over which it rolled, like the object lens of a microscope' (*TD*, XXXV). All subsequent articulations are as 'ghastly and unnatural' as the reflexive phenomena which objectify them, and we watch, horrified, as Angel continues his perceptual slaughter: 'The horrible sense of his view of her so deadened her that she staggered... "Don't - don't! It kills me quite, that!" she shrieked' (*ib.*).²⁰⁷ Mrs Durbeyfield had counselled silence, and, by speaking, Tess explains and thus destroys the reality given her by Clare's eyes: by rationalizing his 'visionary' conception of her, she precipitates her own Fall.

The irony is painfully accurate:

Clare's love was doubtless ethereal to a fault, imaginative to impracticability. With these natures, corporeal presence is sometimes less appealing than corporeal absence; the latter creating an ideal presence that conveniently drops the defects of the real. (*TD*, XXXVI)²⁰⁸

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 195-6.

²⁰⁶ On the importance of speech and on 'silencing' Tess ('she remained mute', *TD*, XXXV), see John Goode, *Thomas Hardy: The Offensive Truth* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), pp. 122-4; Wayne C. Anderson, 'The Rhetoric of Silence in Hardy's Fiction', *Studies in the Novel*, 17 (Spring 1985), 53-68; Margaret Higonnet, 'Fictions of Feminine Voice: Antiphony and Silence in Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', in *Out of Bounds: Male Writers and Gender(ed) Criticism*, ed. Laura Claridge and Elizabeth Langland (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), pp. 197-218; William Morgan, 'Gender and Silence in Thomas Hardy's Texts', in *Gender and Discourse in Victorian Literature and Art*, eds. Antony H. Harrison and Beverly Taylor (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1992), pp. 161-84; Margaret Higonnet, 'Tess and the Problem of Voice', in *The Sense of Sex: Feminist Perspectives on Hardy*, ed. Margaret Higonnet (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 14-31.

²⁰⁷ Cp. the similar reaction of Clare's and Tess's predecessors, Knight and Elfrida. Knight deserts Elfrida after finding her heart is second-hand and shuns her attempt at reconciliation: "O Harry, Harry, you are killing me!...Don't send me away - don't!" (*PBE*, Ch. 35).
²⁰⁸ Pierston suffers under one of 'these natures': 'The soul of Avice - the only woman he had never loved of those who had loved him - surrounded him like a firmament...he loved the woman dead and inaccessible as he had never loved her in life' (*WB*, II.3). See John Marks, 'The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XIII:2 (May 1997), 56-59: 'This contrast between image and reality, between the dream and the substance, was explored by Hardy in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* but appears in its most concentrated form in Hardy's last published novel' (p. 56).

For Angel and his successor, Jocelyn, the rarefied refinement of their love is wrought at the expense of their idols' fleshly absence, and beaten by an 'incoherent multitude of emotions' (*TD*, XL), Angel retreats into a prohibitive social attitude. 'Few of us would venture to maintain that the self *is* the body';²⁰⁹ unfortunately, Clare is one of them. But, understanding part of the psycho-emotional block which prevents him accepting the present Tess, she challenges his subjective construction of her: "'It is in your own mind what you are angry at, Angel: it is not in me'" (*TD*, XXXV),²¹⁰ an echo of her incisive confession after the wedding: "'she you love is not my real self, but one in my image; the one I might have been'" (*TD*, XXXIII).

And so 'more especially inclined to the imaginative and ethereal' (*TD*, XXXI), Clare rejects the corporeal woman, leaving her stunned by the intractable determination of his 'will to subdue the grosser to the subtler, the substance to the conception, the flesh to the spirit' (*TD*, XXXVI), or, as the manuscript has it, the 'physical emotion to the ideal'. Hardy's oppositional model may have been inspired by posthumous praise of Arnold's 'enthusiasm for the nobler and detestation of the meaner elements of humanity' (*EL*, p. 271; April 1888) which repeats the Comtean axiom that 'nobler phenomena are everywhere subordinated to those which are grosser' (*LN*, I, 730).²¹¹ Part of the novel's thesis argues for a Hellenic acceptance of 'the whole range of human enjoyments' which, according to Symonds, prescribed 'no *crude* radical distinction of Mind & Body' (*LN*, I, 637),²¹² and for Arnold demonstrated 'a culture comprehending body and soul in equal measure' (*LN*, I, 101).²¹³ Clare and modern theology refuse such toleration; Tess struggles but is ultimately forced to concede to medieval creeds, and in so 'disconnecting

²⁰⁹ Bradley, 'The Meanings of Self', in *Appearance and Reality*, p. 82.

²¹⁰ There is possibly a deliberate attempt to evoke Shelley after Arnold's description of him as a 'beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain' (see *LY*, p. 136; April 1909). Angel Clare (Fr. 'bright angel') is too close for mere coincidence, and is 'less Byronic than Shelleyan' (*TD*, XXXI).

²¹¹ Comte, *System of Positive Polity*, III, 15.

²¹² Symonds, *Studies of the Greek Poets*, pp. 395-6. See Lewes's definition of this dualism: 'Life is assigned to the physical organism, or Body - all its phenomena are objective. Mind is assigned to the psychical organism, or Soul - all its phenomena are subjective' ('The Course of Modern Thought', p. 324).

²¹³ In this alone, Hardy can be seen to be progressing toward a major Lawrentian concern: 'Life is only bearable when mind and body are in harmony and there is a natural balance between them, and each has a natural respect for the other' ('A Propos of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*', in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. E.D. McDonald, 2 vols (New York: Viking, 1936; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1961), II, 487-515 (p.492). Bradley confronted the 'hopeless difficulty' of the body/soul dualism only two years after the publication of *TD*: 'The relation of body to soul presents a problem which experience seems to show is not really soluble. And I may say at once that I accept and endorse this result' ('Body and Soul', in *Appearance and Reality*, p. 295).

...herself from her past' (immediate and ancient), she is 'obliterating her identity', and, as 'Tess's Lament' (*CP*, 141) continues, 'gone all trace of me'.

The dissociation of character and environment is intimated from the start in the road-banks 'dividing like a splitting stick' (*TD*, VIII) and continues until body and soul approximate Spencer's 'duality'. Gregor's persuasive argument for Tess's 'fractured consciousness' is flatly rejected by Sumner who contends that the view 'falsifies the whole book...unless the emphasis is very strongly on the conscious nature of the division'; convention and Angel apparently neither threaten nor compromise Tess's 'fundamental self'.²¹⁴ Yet given Hardy's initial aims, Tess's 'fatal dislocation of consciousness'²¹⁵ during crucial episodes, and the novel's ending itself, this is exactly what happens. Hardy's intention to polarize the work is evidenced in its original title, 'The Body and Soul of Sue',²¹⁶ the dialectic becoming 'progressively [more] spiritualized' until Tess's reality is entirely a matter of disembodied consciousness. As soon as this step is taken, Hardy transfers his fascination with her body to a total absorption in her spiritual element. At Talbothays she is an 'apparition...merely a soul at large' (*TD*, XX), and by the time she is reappropriated by Alec in Sandbourne, her time here tracing a drugged, almost catatonic, interlude, the transubstantiation (including semi-religious connotations) is complete:

[Angel] had a vague consciousness of one thing, though it was not clear to him till later; that his original Tess had ceased to recognize the body before him as hers - allowing it to drift, like a corpse upon the current, in a direction dissociated from its living will. (*TD*, LV)²¹⁷

²¹⁴ Rosemary Sumner, *Thomas Hardy: Psychological Novelist* (London: Macmillan, 1981), pp. 144-5.

²¹⁵ Ian Gregor, *The Great Web: The Form of Hardy's Major Fiction* (London: Faber & Faber, 1974), p. 187.

²¹⁶ In a letter to Tillotson, Hardy wrote, 'I find that the most suitable title for the story will be, "The Body and Soul of Sue"' (*CL*, I, 194; July 11, 1889). 'Sue' is the third name given to the heroine in the MS after 'Love' and 'Cis'. 'Mary-Rose' was a later alternative. It is significant that Hardy considered entitling the novel *Too Late Beloved* (or *Too Late, Beloved*, the comma exerting a significant change of emphasis), which may be an allusion to Shelley's lines 'O too late / Beloved! O too soon adored, by me!' (*Epipsychidion* (1821), lines 131-2), or to Browning's 'Too Late', which Hardy knew (see *LY*, p. 7; April 1892). If the reference is to Shelley's 'celebration of the perfection of spiritual love', says Marlene Springer, *Hardy's Use of Allusion* (London: Macmillan, 1983), 'it can only be viewed as a bitterly ironic foreshadowing of Angel's idealisation of Tess' (pp. 122-3). But either source, and either title, does not fail to adumbrate the concept of postponement, as Roy Morrell, *Thomas Hardy: The Will and the Way* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1965), p. 32, points out. It is also interesting that, in the light of Tess appearing nominally beforehand as 'Sue', that Sue Bridehead should not only quote from Browning's 'Too Late' (*JO*, 3.IV), but solicit Jude to 'Say those pretty lines...from Shelley's "Epipsychidion" as if they meant me!' (*JO*, 4.V). There may even be a connection between this early title and Keats's apostrophe to Beauty (Tess's name in the *National Observer* version of the Chase scene) as 'O brightest! though too late for antique vows, / Too late for the fond believing lyre' in 'Ode to Psyche' (1820), lines 36-7.

²¹⁷ Hardy explained that Tess remained pure until her last fall when 'she was as a mere corpse drifting in the water to her end - an absolutely irresponsible being' (Anon., 'A Chat with Mr Hardy', *Book Buyer*, n.s. 9 (May 1892), 153). See also Raymond Blathwayt, 'A Chat with the Author of *Tess*', *Black and White* (Aug 27, 1892); rpt. *Thomas Hardy and His Readers: A Selection of Contemporary Reviews*, ed. Laurence Lerner and John Holmstrom (London: The Bodley Head; New York: Barnes & Noble, 1968), pp. 90-7: 'I frankly own that a certain outward purity left her on her last fall. I regarded her then as being in the hands of circumstances, not morally

Angel's retrospective 'vague consciousness' corresponds with the notion that, since Tess is created through a masculine gaze, there is no inner Tess to oppose the outer. He cannot discover any common ground between the real, present figure - Tess's original Tess - and the deified memory of 'his original Tess'.²¹⁸ The narrative eye immediately adumbrates the disjunction, Clare only comes to it with hindsight, and the reader, granted the privileged insight of the narrator, sees into Tess's mind and feels behind the vision to the absolute impression of her reality. Absent from the *Graphic*, this passage represents perhaps the most important addition to the novel as Hardy demands that we accept her purity and spiritualization without question. Paradoxically, this division unifies her on an essential level and she becomes, as Garson says, 'pure spirit, pure voice'.²¹⁹

responsible, a mere corpse drifting with the current to her end' (p. 95). Cp. Cytherea's passive acceptance of Manston's proposal: 'She felt as one in a boat without oars, drifting with closed eyes down a river - she knew not whither' (*DR*, 12. 6). This, Hardy's first use of the river figure to express resignation, may have been predicated upon a whole scene in Eliot's *Romola* (Ch. LXI). See also Maggie Tulliver's destiny as defined by Eliot: 'Maggie's destiny, then, is to reveal itself like the course of an unmapped river. We only know that the river is full and rapid, and that for all rivers there is the same final home' (*The Mill on the Floss*, (1860), ed. A.S. Byatt (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1979), VI. 6). Earlier still, Dickens alludes to this figure to express the demise of Mrs Gradgrind: 'Left alone with her mother. Louisa saw her with an awful lull upon her face, like one whom was floating away upon some great water, all resistance over, content to be carried down the stream' (*Hard Times*, (1854), 2. IX). The image of life/introspection/time as a river stream has a long tradition. Matthew Arnold refers to 'The unregarded river of our life' which we divine 'in blind uncertainty' ('The Buried Life' (1852), lines 39, 43), and D.G. Rossetti frequently used it as a dominant figure; 'The Stream's Secret', offers a perfect example. In her *The Poetry of Dante Gabriel Rossetti: Modes of Self-Expression*, Rees, in a peculiarly Eliotean turn of phrase, remarks, 'In "The Stream's Secret", the waters lead, as does the course of a lifetime, to death. Love, Life and Death, Rossetti's trinity, group themselves at the end of the poem and in the waters of death, as in the waters of Lethe, the past will at last be laid to rest' (p. 91). Water may be a symbol of Life, but in all instances of Victorian art, be it prose, poetry or painting, Love offers it with 'Death's eyes' ('The Stream's Secret', line 219). And the drowning of beautiful women, literally or figuratively, is similarly widespread, from John Millais's 'Ophelia' (1852) to the death-voyage of Tennyson's 'The Lady of Shalott' (1832), and Holman Hunt's and John Waterhouse's paintings of the same (1886-1905 and 1888 respectively). Each artist's use of the image precedes William James's phrase, 'the stream of thought, of consciousness, or of subjective life' (quoted in Lloyd Morris's *William James: the Message of the Modern Mind* (New York: Scribner, 1950; New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), p. 17), and by the second decade of the twentieth century, Lawrence has picked up on the figure, Ursula's climactic encounter with the horses producing a paralysis of will: 'As she sat there, spent, time and the flux of change passed away from her. she lay as if unconscious upon the bed of a stream, like a stone, unconscious... whilst everything rolled by... leaving her there... unalterable and passive' (*The Rainbow*, Ch. XVI).

²¹⁸ Winterborne faces a similar dilemma over the loss of his 'original Grace' once she becomes physically accessible. Giles's 'curious sense of discovery' wreaks an 'inevitable change' in his 'deity', and he is 'grieved' by the appearance of this 'new woman' (*W*, XXXVIII). And there are religious connotations. See Joseph Warren Beach, *The Technique of Thomas Hardy* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1922; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1962): characters' names are chosen largely for their combination of biblical and rustic associations' (p. 52). As Daniel Schwarz, 'Beginnings and Endings in Hardy's Major Fiction', in *Critical Approaches to Thomas Hardy*, ed. Dale Kramer (London: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 17-35, says, 'The very name of Grace enables Hardy to play on the irony of the atheist Fitzpiers's quest for Grace's love' (p. 28), and apotheosizes her for Giles.

²¹⁹ Marjorie Garson, *Hardy's Fables of Integrity: Woman, Body, Text* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 143. See also Pierre Coustillas, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles où le Dernier Vol de la Pureté*, *Fabula*, 6 (1985), 107-27; Charles C.P. Pettit, 'Hardy's Concept of Purity in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, VII:3 (Oct 1991), 48-56; Lynn Parker, "'Pure Woman" and Tragic Heroine? Conflicting Myths in Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *Studies in the Novel*, 24:3 (Fall 1992), 273-81; Karen Scherzinger, 'The Problem of the Pure Woman: South African Pastoralism and Female Rites of Passage', *Unisa English Studies*, 29:2 (Sept 1991), 29-35. refers to *TD*; Susan David Bernstein, 'Confessing and Editing: The Politics of Purity in Hardy's *Tess*', in *Virginal Sexuality and Textuality in Victorian Literature*, ed. Lloyd Davis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), pp. 159-78. See also my 'Tragic Paradox and Tess as Totem: An Impure Woman', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 26 (Dec 1997), 16-19. Interestingly enough, Grant Allen's infamous *The Woman Who Did* (1895; Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), insists throughout on the purity of its heroine. At the start, the ambivalent use of the word is contextualized in a moment reminiscent of Angel's dawn apotheosis of Tess: 'Alan thought as he looked at her he had never before seen anybody who appeared at all so nearly to approach his ideal of womanhood. She was at once so high in type, so serene, so tranquil, and yet so purely womanly' (Ch. II). Then, in relatively quick succession, Herminia is cast as a 'stainless soul' (Ch. IV), defended after her physical espousal: 'To the pure all things are pure; and Herminia was dowered with that perfect purity', praised for her 'moral purity' (Ch. VII), described by Alan as a 'stainless woman' (Ch. VIII), and referred to by the narrator as 'that spotless woman' of 'perfect purity' (Ch. IX). The final sentence, commenting on her selfless suicide, recedes into the decidedly ambiguous: 'Herminia Barton's stainless soul had ceased to exist for ever' (Ch. XXIV).

At Stonehenge, the magical abstraction of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* as day-dream finds complete expression in two figures. The first imagines the monument as the most sublime of instruments, Coleridge's Mad Lutanist playing upon the edifice 'like the note of some gigantic one-stringed harp' (*TD*, LVIII). Angel's strumming in the garden prefigures this Apollonian equivalent just as his presence as a metaphorical sun is glorified in the second figure: 'Soon the light was strong, and a ray shone upon her unconscious form, peering under her eyelids and waking her' (*ib.*).²²⁰ In this inclusive image, Hardy fulfils the objectives of the novel: to wake the dreamer, dissolve the dream and the dreamed reality, and transfer their existence onto some higher plane. Artistically and thematically, this final and total liberating/awakening of the soul from its corporeal sleep is illustrated through the only medium possible: light. 'Awake, my soul, and with the sun!' (*LY*, p. 45; Dec 1895).²²¹

Dreams are now absent presences. Tess's expectant dream of meeting Angel elsewhere is denied, his kiss betraying her imaginative fantasy, and she falls asleep one last time into 'Reality's dark dream'²²² which is to have no dreams at all. Watched, as always, the dreamer 'finish[es] her sleep' and briefly abandons the unfathomable depths of unconsciousness to face external reality. Her final articulation, 'I am ready' (*TD*, LVIII), denotes that the real Tess, Tess to herself, has become one with the soul, the source of all emotional life; her body, no longer accorded existence, disappears "off-stage" to be figuratively displaced by the black flag, a palimpsest of her entire life.²²³ She becomes one of those 'abstracted god[desse]s, "ready to melt out their essence fine into the winds"',²²⁴ and as they blow, so Tess is played by the 'stiff' breezes as she hangs,

²²⁰ This episode at Stonehenge, and the final sentence of *TD*, seem to have an ancestor in *Ruth*. Having spurned Bellingham's offer of marriage to make amends, Ruth flings herself down on the bleak moors and wishes for death: 'She shut her eyes, until through the closed lids came a ruddy blaze of light. The clouds had parted away, and the sun was going down in a crimson glory behind the distant purple hills. The whole western sky was one flame of fire...She sat up gazing...The sunset calmed her...It even seemed to give her strength and courage...She rose, and went slowly towards home' (Ch. XXIV). But the sunset which fills Ruth - who goes from it 'a sleep-walker' - with an 'unconscious sense of God's infinity', 'ready' to encounter further agonies, is a Pagan dawn of final fulfillment for Tess.

²²¹ George Eliot uses this, and following two lines, in the first chapter of *Adam Bede* to introduce the voice, and then the physique, of the hero.

²²² Coleridge, 'Dejection: An Ode' (1802), line 95.

²²³ Tess is a symbolic palimpsest: she begins as a white gown, a *tabula rasa*, and becomes so over-inscribed that the black flag she ends up as is so overwritten as to be indecipherable. The pattern of her life also bears a remarkable similarity to Richard Crashaw's 'A Hymne to Sainte Teresa' (1648). The most outstanding correlations are Crashaw's fear that 'Thy tender life / Should bleed upon a barbarous knife' (69-70); he refers to 'thy spouse's radiant Name' (82); speaks 'Of a sweet & subtle Pain. / Of intolerable Joyes' (98-9); envisages her death as a leaving behind of the body: 'so fast / Shalt thou exhale to Heavn at last / In a resolving Sigh' (125-7) to be eternally attended by 'The Moon of maiden stars, thy white / Mistresse' (123-4).

²²⁴ Paton, *The Renaissance*, p. 224.

suspended like Coleridge's Harp on the tree, but as she has been rendered mute there can be no dreams for the slumberer.²²⁵ Her prophetic recollection of those times when 'our souls can be made to go outside our bodies...which you don't seem to want at all' (*TD*, XVIII)²²⁶ is satisfied, and the process of her spiritualization raises her above the material world which is left empty, passionless and lifeless when she is taken from it.

Even at this moment of exquisite transcendence, Hardy does not lose control. As with previous examples which integrate euphoric emotionalism and natural descriptions, he does not forget the bare facts underpinning real life. It is because of this intense, realistic strain that *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Hardy's most poetic novel, is also his *magnum opus*, yet the most famous contemporary note threatens to refute this:

Art is a disproportioning - (i.e. distorting, throwing out of proportion) - of realities, to show more clearly the features that matter in those realities, which, if merely copied or reported inventorially...would...probably be overlooked. Hence 'realism' is not art. (*EL*, p. 299; Aug 1890)

This crystallizes Hardy's fictional aesthetic and, though applicable to the other novels, is the key to *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. The actualized 'vision' may be a sublimation of subjective conceptions or 'visible essences', but it simultaneously distorts those copied representations of reality to expose the essentialist misrepresentation for what it is. It illuminates another truth which such misrepresentations obscure: 'reality' is only ever 'a series of seemings', a set of individualized 'abstract imaginings' or 'impressions' which are felt into existence.

The personal significance of these realities accounts for the explicit, affective appeal of the text; everything seen, interpreted and recreated draws on the most prosaic

²²⁵ See Coleridge's 'The Snowdrop' (1800):
 The Harp uphung by golden chains
 Of that low wind which whispers round...
 The music hovers half-perceiv'd,
 And only moulds the slumberer's dreams. (lines 57-8, 61-2)

The image is repeated in Christina Rossetti's 'Mirage' (1860):
 I hang my harp upon a tree,
 A weeping willow in a lake;
 I hang my silenced harp there, wrung and snapt
 For a dream's sake. (lines 5-8)

See Beth Kalikoff, 'The Execution of Tess of the d'Urbervilles at Wintoncoster', in *Executions and the British Experience from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century: A Collection of Essays*, ed. William Thesing (Jefferson, N.C., McFarland, 1990), pp. 111-21.

²²⁶ Cp. Bradley: 'My body, as I dream, may often, I remember, seem more or less helpless and ineffectual' ('On my Real World', in *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 461).

of feelings and experiences: 'emotion' makes 'matter' through sympathetic perceptual mediation. Hardy was certainly no stranger to this method, as earlier works testify, but the perceptual thesis at work in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is profoundly different. In *The Return of the Native* and *The Woodlanders*, for instance, Hardy colours his landscapes with his moods, and it is his intellectual/jaundiced eye which controls external reality, but in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, as in *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy relinquishes the optical reigns to the protagonist, a significant gesture which grants each work its autonomy. Tess generates her own story, her own world, and though *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* may be 'faithfully presented by Thomas Hardy', it is she who dictates the tale.²²⁷

This novel, more than any other in the canon to date, denies phenomena existence without a mind to perceive them; unlike the Hardy who brooded over Egdon's ultimate secret, the Hardy of Tess's Wessex 'leaves no absolute physical reality which can be contemplated in entire detachment from the position of the contemplator' (*LN*, II, 2451).²²⁸ The observer affects the observed as it has always done, but never before has the relationship been so symbiotic, for when Tess experiences the world she engages it in a (re)creative interaction. Earlier works give the sense of an ineffable absolute at the heart of things however protean they ostensibly appear, but *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* replaces any such finite reality with an essentially emotional flux; every object responds to her glance, moves to her touch, and reflects her moods and assumptions. It is a rare moment of Carlylean transcendentalism at this stage: 'So that this so solid-seeming World, after all, were but an air-image, our ME the only reality: and Nature...but the reflex of our own inward Force, the "phantasy of our Dream"'.²²⁹

In effect, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, 'an impression, not an argument', is akin to 'some passing perception, the outcome of a dream hour',²³⁰ a blissful moment of introspection when

...bodily eyes
Were utterly forgotten...what I saw
Appeared like something in myself, a dream,
A prospect in the mind.²³¹

²²⁷ Hardy assumes the position assigned to Elizabeth-Jane, and is like 'the evangelist who had to write it down' (*MC*, XXVI).

²²⁸ 'From Absolute to Relative', *Times Literary Supplement* (Dec 9, 1920), p. 814.

²²⁹ Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, I. VIII.

²³⁰ Preface to the fifth edition of *TD*, 1892.

²³¹ Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, Book II, 349-52.

Seen in this context, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is one novel which conforms to Woolf's placing of Hardy alongside 'unconscious writers' like Dickens and Scott who 'seem suddenly and without their own consent to be lifted and swept onwards. The wave sinks and they cannot say what has happened or why'.²³² As a metaphor for emotion, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is, like emotion itself, vitiated once exposed to the rigors of critical exegesis, and this is why, though Hardy incorporates some of the debates then current, it is destructive to weave into this dream-laden 'series of seemings' a conscious philosophy. The moment the dreamer opens her eyes and is made conscious of what she is doing, the vision evaporates. And because 'no dream's worth waking' (*LN*, II, 1764),²³³ we should note Hardy's note of Henry James's advice and not disturb that felt, creative 'genius' which 'is a kind of somnambulism. The artist performs great feats in a dream. We must not wake him up lest he should lose his balance' (*LN*, I, 1152).²³⁴

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²³² Virginia Woolf, 'The Novels of Thomas Hardy' (1928), in *The Common Reader: Second Series* (London: Hogarth Press, 1932), pp. 245-57 (p. 247).

²³³ Robert Browning, 'Development', *Asolando: Fancies and Facts* (1890), line 87.

²³⁴ Henry James, *Roderick Hudson* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), p. 39.

VIII
'THE VACANT EYE ON VIEWLESS MATTER':¹
UNSEEING, UNKNOWNING AND UNCREATING REALITY IN
***JUDE THE OBSCURE* (1895)**

They (realists, naturalists) are reproached above all with diminishing, saddening, & degrading the spectacle of the world...The vice of the new school...is not in the object of study (the lowest things) but in the eye which studies that object. (*LN*, I, 1632)²

And my eyes have not the vision in them to discern what to these is so clear,
 The blot seems straightway in me alone.
 ('In Tenebris II', *CP*, 137)

The outrage occasioned by *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was at least mitigated by the praise its artistic power and beauty excited; *Jude the Obscure* enjoyed no such respite from the votaries of Mrs Grundy. 'Mr Hardy has long taught us to expect much that is disagreeable and disquieting in his books',³ claimed an anonymous reviewer, and *Jude the Obscure* simply vindicated the vilification: 'The "series of seemings" stand forth in naked squalor and ugliness, shaped indeed by the hand of a master, but of a master in a nightmare',⁴ pages of prolific, 'realistic details' were found 'not merely gratuitous, but disgusting'.⁵ Yet despite such defamatory critiques, the reserved admiration of its 'gloomy, sullen force which is undeniably real' yet mimetic of 'shadow-plays - wonderful landscapes strangely horrific when meant to suggest the terrible, and true by their very reticence',⁶ pin-points one of the work's revolutionary characteristics. It is this disturbingly dissonant combination of the overt and the suggestive which threatens to fragment the novel and leaves it, in Goode's memorable phrase, 'unfit for consumption'.⁷

¹ George Crabbe, 'The Lover's Journey' (1812), line 9. Hardy honoured Crabbe 'as an apostle of realism who practised in English literature three-quarters of a century before the French realistic school had been heard of' (*LY*, p. 114; Sept 1905). For Crabbe and Hardy, the emotional perceiver is all creative where reality is concerned.

² Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé, 'De la Littérature Réaliste, à propos du Roman Russe', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 75 (May 15, 1886), 288-309.

³ Anon., *The Guardian*, (Nov 13, 1895); rpt. *Thomas Hardy: Critical Appreciations*, ed. Graham Clarke, 4 vols (Sussex: Helm Information Ltd, 1993), I, 235-6 (I, 236). Hereafter cited as *TH:CA*.

⁴ Anon., *Pall Mall Gazette*, (Nov 12, 1895); rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 232-4 (I, 233).

⁵ Anon., *The World* (Nov 13, 1895); rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 237-8 (I, 237).

⁶ Anon., *Athenaeum* (Nov 23, 1895), 709; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 240-3 (I, 243).

⁷ John Goode, *Thomas Hardy: The Offensive Truth* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), p. 140.

With this 'misdirected effort in decadent realism',⁸ Hardy had overstepped the mark and pushed fiction into a new era.

It seems to be a literary truth universally acknowledged that, after *Jude the Obscure*, poetry was the only avenue left open to Hardy, yet this was not, as has traditionally been argued, simply because of the adverse response provoked by *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*.⁹ It was instead a logical conclusion. Hardy had undone the fictional processes of traditional realism, and poetry was, for him at this time, the only remaining avenue. His progressive inability to separate his narratives from his moods had led him right away from conventional realistic techniques in pursuit of the inimitable 'value' of 'unadjusted impressions'¹⁰ with their 'sense of disconnection'.¹¹ As Widdowson acknowledges, Hardy 'seems to have reached a formal *impasse* in giving expression to his world-view'.¹²

Looking back over his career, Hardy defined his conception of the Art of Fiction in the preface to *Jude the Obscure*, which, like his former productions, was

simply an endeavour to give shape and coherence to a series of seemings or personal impressions, the question of their consistency or their discordance, of their permanence or their transitoriness, being regarded as not of the first moment.¹³

Despite this admission, Mizener sees the Hardy of *Jude the Obscure* as rigidly committed to the naturalistic form, as one who 'never really faced the possibility that a great work of art aims at a kind of superior truth (but not necessarily contradictory) to a scientific and historical verisimilitude',¹⁴ as one subscribing to the single assumption which justifies the realistic novel: 'there can only be one kind of reality'.¹⁵ He finds the symbolic dimension of a narrative designed to 'give shape and coherence' to personal 'impressions' ineffectual,

⁸ Anon., *The Sun* (Nov 20, 1895); rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 239.

⁹ Peter Widdowson, *Thomas Hardy* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1996), offers three reasons: 'First, partly financial: when he could afford to stop producing novels he did so; secondly, partly personal: the scandalized response...to *Tess* and *Jude* had seriously depressed him; thirdly, partly aesthetic:...Hardy's fictional writing was increasingly pressing against the limits of nineteenth-century realist conventions, challenging and subverting them' (p. 76).

¹⁰ Preface to *Poems of the Past and Present* (1901), in *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, pp. 38-9 (p. 39).

¹¹ Preface to *The Dynasts*, Parts First and Second (1904, 1906), in *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, pp. 39-43 (p. 39).

¹² Widdowson, *Thomas Hardy*, p. 76.

¹³ Preface to First Edition of *JO*.

¹⁴ Arthur Mizener, 'Jude the Obscure as a Tragedy', *Southern Review*, VI (1940), 193-213; rpt. *TH:CA*, IV, 167-182 (IV, 170).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

and merely indicative of 'a kind of desperate contrivance' or 'systematic artifice'.¹⁶ These are moot points given that the principal recommendation of *Jude the Obscure* lies in its failure as an orthodox work of Victorian realistic prose; it is highly poetical. Moreover, in exaggerating the realism of *Jude the Obscure*, Mizener ignores or misconstrues the prefatory declaration which reveals the crux of Hardy's poetical 'discoveries of dissonance', to use Kermode's phrase:¹⁷ one moment, he aims to impose 'shape and coherence' on mental abstractions; the next, he refutes the importance of 'consistency...or discordance'. Such ambivalence typifies the text's contradictory form, its violent integration of disparate styles, and although 'language and imagery reinforce the urge towards fragmentation and contradiction',¹⁸ the overall structure, founded on antitheses, is unified.

This is where *Jude the Obscure* differs from its forerunners. Though apparently rigidly controlled and symmetrical, conscious authorial displacement means that the narrative's integrity is organic, not designed; form is intrinsically generated, not extrinsically imposed; unity is a matter of imaginative reconciliation, not artificial contrivance. And by exteriorizing himself, Hardy's anterior objectivism foils the characters' interior subjectivism, a disjunction which precludes the consolation expected in the enclosed world of traditional realistic fiction. On two occasions Hardy intrudes as 'the chronicler of these lives' (*JO*, 5.V, 6.XI), acknowledges the reader's presence, and defines the extent of his obligations: 'the purpose of a chronicler of moods and deeds does not require him to express his personal views' (*JO*, 5.V),¹⁹ but he does, especially when intrusive interpolation, external to the fictional reality, antagonizes the inner view. Such transparent denials of complicity in the reality of the scenes witnessed extends to the ultimate control of the narrative. It is not, we are informed, Hardy making things happen; rather, the creation asserts its own rules: 'The plot is geometrically constructed -

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 179.

¹⁸ Rosemary Sumner, 'Discoveries of Dissonance: Hardy's Late Fiction', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XI:3 (Oct 1995), 79-88 (p. 85). See also Frederick McDowell, 'Hardy's "Seemings or Personal Impressions": The Symbolic Use of Image and Contrast in *Jude the Obscure*', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 6:3 (Autumn 1960), 233-50; Lewis B. Home, 'Pattern and Contrast in *Jude the Obscure*', *Etudes Anglaises*, 32:2 (1979), 143-53.

¹⁹ We are aware of the narrator's presence in *JO* who intrudes almost as a semi-character. For a fuller discussion of Hardy's narrators see Daniel Schwarz, 'The Narrator as Character in Hardy's Major Fiction', *Modern Fiction Studies*, XVIII (1972), 155-72.

I ought not to say *constructed*, for, beyond a certain point, the characters necessitated it, and I simply let it come' (*LY*, p. 40; Nov 1895). As all perceptions and incidents are necessary consequences of internal circumstances and character, *Jude the Obscure* 'has a unity very uncommon in the novel, and especially the English novel',²⁰ a critical view which has persisted well into this century, Sisson claiming that 'the book is *constructed*, to a degree not to be found in any of Hardy's other novels, and in few English novels of the nineteenth century'.²¹

The formal economy of this poetical novel encouraged a scientific contemporary response. Gosse commended its 'rectangular form', appreciated that the situations were 'drawn with almost mathematical rigidity', and allowed that the text was 'constructed in a mode almost as geometrical' as that used 'to prove a theory'.²² Its 'rectilinear'²³ intricacies affiliate it with the other highly-wrought poetical novels, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* and *The Well-Beloved*,²⁴ and distinguish it from traditional realism²⁵ even while it sublimates the era's clashes and contradictions. So clear-cut that they obviate the admission of any exception or variation, these patterned, consistent inconsistencies initiate so total a formal take-over as to make *Jude the Obscure* the most claustrophobic of Hardy's novels. These perceptual incongruities are also the most treacherous to negotiate in that antithetical impressions coalesce, jarring events rhyme through repetition, and discordant versions of reality occur so many times and in so many different contexts that they echo. The reality thus created possesses a formal and

²⁰ W.D. Howells, *Harper's Weekly* (Dec 7, 1895); rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 245-7 (I, 247). Also on the narrative structure, see Forest Pyle, 'Demands of History: Narrative Crisis in *Jude the Obscure*', *New Literary History*, 26:2 (Spring 1995), 359-78; Norman D. Prentiss, 'The Tortured Form of *Jude the Obscure*', *Colby Quarterly*, 31:3 (Sept 1995), 179-93.

²¹ C.H. Sisson's introduction to the Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978 edition, pp. 11-26 (p. 25).

²² Edmund Gosse, *Cosmopolis*, 1 (Jan 1896), 60-9; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 253-9 (I, 254).

²³ *Ibid.*, I, 256.

²⁴ Especially to Marcel Proust. As George Painter explains in *Marcel Proust: A Biography*, 2 vols (London: Chatto & Windus, 1959; rpt. 1978), 'The Well-Beloved, together with *Jude the Obscure* and *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, remained in Proust's mind throughout the writing of his [*À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*] (II, 154). In his novel, Proust refers to the 'stonemason's geometry' (*Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C.K. Scott-Moncrieff, et al., 3 vols (New York: Random House; London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), III, 382) that is a Hardyian peculiarity. Proust's analysis is important not only because it pays tribute to the internal echoes of individual works, but because it traces their extension throughout the series: 'I observe in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* this admirable geometrical parallelism...as in *The Well-Beloved*...And always, as in *Jude the Obscure*, the bit of sculpture...The novels of Thomas Hardy are constructed...superimposingly...one upon the other' (*Cahiers Marcel Proust: Le Carnet de 1908*, ed. Philip Kolb (Paris: Plon, 1976), p. 114). J.B. Bullen, *The Expressive Eye: Fiction and Perception in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), p. 228, also draws attention to these parallels. For a discussion of the influence that Hardy exerted on Proust's own work, see Peter J. Casagrande, *Hardy's Influence on the Modern Novel* (London: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 110-33; Frank G. Healey, 'Proust and Hardy - An Update', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, X:2 (May 1994), 51-7; Robert Langbaum, *Thomas Hardy in Our Time* (London: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 141-55.

²⁵ Though such controlled, metaphorical patterning was absent from such as Dickens, there was a definite preference during the first half of the century for minutely-managed contrasts and juxtapositions. Life was understood as a series of balanced variations, and many novels worked to a clear schematic pattern. Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) is the most obvious example. In *Middlemarch* (1872), Dorothea experiences mild success as Lydgate is dogged by failure; the heroine of *Romola* (1863) advances as Tito falls. In *FMC*, Oak loses his flock and Bathsheba inherits a farm.

perceptual coherence (outer actuality) which does not negate that latent incoherence (the disparity between inner desire and outer actuality), and these poetical short-cuts make the subtler, psychological aberrations from expected norms all the more poignant because of their reticence in the face of such conspicuous shapes. Ellis observes that '*Jude* has a certain symmetry of plan such as is rare in the actual world',²⁶ but Gosse also sees that Hardy's 'imagination, noble as it is, and attuned to the great harmonies of nature, is liable at a moment's notice to give a shriek of discord'.²⁷

Jude the Obscure dramatizes these problematical gaps and discontinuities by offsetting Jude's extreme subjectivism and the narrator's 'absolute disengagement of the physical from the mental, i.e. the objective from the subjective aspect of phenomena', by 'suppressing everything pertaining to the subjective aspect of phenomena'.²⁸ Latter-day Wessex symbolizes imaginative absence rather than presence, yet, and this is typical of Hardy, such explicit omissions achieve an implicit presence in the act of reading. Kincaid describes these open spaces as 'incongruous solidities...Multiple and contradictory', these 'organizing patterns'²⁹ generate the novel's formal incoherence³⁰ and torture characters determined to make things 'rhyme' in a fundamentally discordant world. Any subjective perception of harmony Jude experiences provokes the narrative eye into an opposing response which explodes the reconciliation. These asymmetrical visions formalize the basic confusion and instability, and nowhere else in Hardy does awareness of this 'radical disunity'³¹ arrive at such an early age in the hero.

As a ten-year-old child, Jude is reluctant to relinquish his subjective illusions of possible balance in the outside world because it demands a too-fundamental relocation of the self:

Events did not rhyme quite as he had thought. Nature's logic was too horrid

²⁶ Havelock Ellis, *Savoy Magazine*, VI (Oct 1896), 35-49; rpt. *Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage*, ed. R.G. Cox (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), 330-15 (p. 307).

²⁷ Gosse, *TH:CA*, I, 259. Wilde was later to refer to human companionship as 'an accompaniment to life as music might be, keeping things in tune and filling with melody the harsh or silent places' (*De Profundis* (1905; London: Methuen & Co., 1949), p. 200).

²⁸ G.H. Lewes, 'The Course of Modern Thought', *Fortnightly Review*, XXI (1877), 317-27 (pp. 317, 318).

²⁹ R. Kincaid, 'Hardy's Absences', in *Critical Approaches to the Novels of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Dale Kramer (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 202-14 (p. 202). See also Mary Ann Kelly, 'Individuation and Consummation in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*: The Lure of the Void', *Victorian Newsletter*, 82 (Fall 1992), 62-4.

³⁰ This term refers to the state in which the reader perceives competing patterns organizing details in the text, no one of which is able to dominate the others. The incoherent text is indeterminate but not univocal. See Kincaid's 'Coherent Readers, Incoherent Texts', *CI*, III (1977), 781-802. This strategy may also support what Barthes would term a 'moderately plural (i.e., merely polysemous)' text in that its meaning is not 'frankly determinable' (*SS: An Essay* (1970), trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill & Waring, 1974), p. 6).

³¹ John Bayley, *An Essay on Hardy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 118.

for him...As you got older, and felt yourself to be at the centre of your time, and not a point on its circumference, as you had felt when you were little, you were seized with a sort of shuddering, he perceived. All around you there seemed to be something glaring, garish, rattling, and the noises and glares hit upon the little cell called your life, and...warped it...He did not want to be a man. (*JO*, I.II)

This passage fictionalizes the corresponding experience of an eight-year-old Hardy:

He...covered his face with his straw hat...Reflecting on his experience of the world as far as he had got, he came to the conclusion that he did not want to grow up...[H]e did not want to be a man, but to remain as he was, in the same spot. (*EL*, pp. 19-20; 1848)³²

Hardy's distanced scrutiny accentuates the act of self-detachment,³³ of separating perceiver and perceived, narrative and subject. And the reflex is involuntary. The only demonstration of will here is not to will, to remain on the periphery of life. The novel's version displaces the young Hardy and illustrates the oscillating, often tense, interaction of protagonist and chronicler through opposition: Jude grows into a consciousness of the disparity between subjective desire (his) and objective actuality (the narrator's), the asynchronous design contributing another consistent inconsistency. As Goode remarks while citing this passage, '*Jude the Obscure* rejoices in its entanglements'.³⁴ These 'entanglements' deny the possibility of a coherent response to life, and to fiction, but Jude is helped to this precocious insight by the narrator's commentary which subverts the 'logical' process of gaining knowledge through experience. In addition, although it is implied that there exists some kind of 'logic' in Nature, its essential capriciousness is exposed in an incident which produces contradictory effects. The problem arises when this underlying logic upsets the expectation of another type of coherence, Jude's innate 'sense of harmony'.

³² Cp. 'Childhood Among the Ferns', *CP*, 846. See Elizabeth Langland, 'Becoming a Man in *Jude the Obscure*', in *The Sense of Sex: Feminist Perspectives on Hardy*, ed. Margaret Higonnet (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 32-48.

³³ See J. Hillis Miller, *Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), Ch. 1. Though the reader need not equate the narrator of *JO* with Hardy, it is the ability to distinguish between the narrator's voice and Jude's - as in this passage - which intensifies the sense of dislocation. Dale Kramer, *Thomas Hardy: The Forms of Tragedy* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975), maintains that the narrator presents conflicting points of view from the characters without allocating any with superior status. Kramer argues that, rather than equating the narrator's and Hardy's views, the narrator often voices (ironically) Jude's speculations and view of the world. Daniel Schwarz, 'The Narrator as Character in Hardy's Major Fiction', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 18 (1972), 155-72, contends that the narrator presents Jude's world view without irony.

³⁴ Goode, *Thomas Hardy: The Offensive Truth*, p. 138.

Empedocles' question, 'Thou feelest thy soul's frame / Shaken and out of chime?'³⁵ receives an unequivocal affirmative, Hardy's application of the musical figure sounding this underlying discord. The Spirit of the Pities watches men 'making inharmonious jars / In [Nature's] creation' (*D*, 1, Fore Scene) and longs for 'a thorough-sphered melodic rule, / And governance of sweet consistency' (*D*, 1.V.iv), but the experienced Spirit of the Years, knowing that 'Something of difference animates your quiring... / From chords consistent with our spectacle!', looks on as Will 'measures out the droning tune of Things' (*D*, 3, After Scene). The footnote to this truism alludes to Horace's '*concordia discors*', and in 'Genitrix Laesa' (*CP*, 736), Nature is censured for pretending that the 'rhythmic chime is holding', that all is 'chord[ed] tunefully', when "'concordia discors'" is the ubiquitous reality; the Mother's 'world-webs' are not woven 'to according lutes and tabors' ('The Lacking Sense', *CP*, 80). Like the Pities, Hardy would like to believe in a universal harmony, but his Years persuade him of Nature's 'discordant jingles' (*D*, 3.I.vi). More to the point, her 'purblind blinking', that facility in overlooking the defective, is an infirmity inherited by the majority of her creations. And Jude is one of them.

The literal and metaphorical blinding of the first 'modern man' seventeen years earlier is now borne by Jude, and the affliction leaves him impotently 'groping in the dark' (*JO*, 6.I). If 'thought is a disease' (*RN*, 2.VI) for Clym, remedy demanding mental adoption of Egdon's 'incredible slowness' (*RN*, 1.I), for Jude it explodes into a pathological condition concomitant with incredible speed. The 'spirit of mental and social restlessness' characterizing 'these days' (*JO*, 6.I) remembers Arnold's bemoaning the 'sick hurry' of 'modern life'³⁶ four decades earlier, and confronts head-on his diagnosis of 'the modern situation in its true blankness and barrenness, and unpoetrylessness'.³⁷ Arnold

³⁵ M. Arnold, 'Empedocles on Etna' (1852), Act I, Scene II, lines 114-5. Empedocles persists with the metaphor: 'To tunes we did not call our being must keep chime' (l. ii. 196). The figure appears to have been very popular, Christina Rossetti using it to draw her 'Diverse Worlds. Time and Eternity' (1858), in *The Poetical Works of Christina Georgina Rossetti*, ed. William Rossetti (London: Macmillan, 1928). Though 'Paradise accords the chimes / Of Earth and Heaven' (lines 7-8), 'man's daily life... / Is out of tune with daily bells' (lines 5-6). Rossetti and Hardy may both depict their cosmologies in musical terms, but the significance pertaining to each is very different; Rossetti's hopeful faith in a harmonizing afterlife is Hardy's pessimistic belief that the universal strings are just as discordant as those on earth.

³⁶ Arnold, 'The Scholar-Gipsy' (1853), lines 203-4. This poem bears a close enough resemblance to *JO* to suggest that it was actually at the back of Hardy's mind. Cp. the definition of that 'modern fever and fret which consumes people before they can grow old' (*La* Ch. 2), and E.M. Forster's comparable insight into 'this nomadic civilization which is altering human nature so profoundly' in *Howard's End* (1910), Ch. 31. Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (1873; London: Macmillan, 1922), offsets this modern intellectual disease with 'Greek sensuousness' which 'does not fever the conscience' (p. 222).

³⁷ *The Letters of Matthew Arnold to Arthur Hugh Clough*, ed. H.F. Lowry (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 126.

affirms that '*congestion of the brain* is what we suffer from - I always feel it and say it - and cry for air like my own Empedocles',³⁸ the Empedocles who has been corrupted by 'the devouring flame of thought' into an 'eternally restless mind!'³⁹ The incompatibility of intellectual tenacity and 'paralysis' (*JO*, 6.I) of will contemporizes the problem which Hardy places before his protagonists and induces a divorce not only from themselves but, as Paterson says, an 'alienation of the intelligent and sensitive individual from life and society'.⁴⁰ But whereas Arnold's scholar-gipsy, 'undiverted to the world without', retains the freshness of his powers because free from the tyranny of the analytical mind which tears all out of shape, Jude resembles those who are not 'free from the sick fatigue' of spent energies,

Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,
And each half-lives a hundred different lives...
Whose vague resolves never have been fulfilled...
Who hesitate and falter life away.⁴¹

Jude articulates this failing as a perceptual flaw when he admits to engaging his academic dreams blindly, "'without seeing where I am going, or what I am aiming at... This hovering won't do!'" (*JO*, 2.VI).

Hardy is deeply divided on the issue of the 'modern vice of unrest' (*JO*, 2.II), Carlyle's 'nameless Unrest' which 'in these sick days'⁴² vitiates static, unruffled perception. Like Teufelsdröckh, Jude is 'the *Ewige Jude*...the modern Wandering Jew' who wends 'to and fro with aimless speed',⁴³ plagued by relentless journeying and endless discussion which obviates any chance for observation.⁴⁴ In an Arnoldian sense, too, 'thought and mind / Will hurry us with them on their homeless march'.⁴⁵ The irony is that all action is prevarication and 'aimless Discontinuity',⁴⁶ all debate is cyclical;⁴⁷ any

³⁸ Ibid., p. 130.

³⁹ Arnold, 'Empedocles on Etna' (1852), Act II, lines 329-30.

⁴⁰ John Paterson, *The Making of 'The Return of the Native'* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1960), p. 66.

⁴¹ Arnold, 'The Scholar-Gipsy' ('Destiny' (1852), lines 4, 10). Jude is certainly at the mercy of 'the Powers that sport with man!' in that he is 'An aimless unallayed Desire' ('Destiny' (1852), lines 4, 10).

⁴² Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus: The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh* (1832; London: Chapman & Hall, 1870), II.VI.

⁴³ Ibid., I.III, II.VI.

⁴⁴ See Janet Freeman, 'Highways and Cornfields: Space and Time in the Narrative of *Jude the Obscure*', *Colby Quarterly*, 27:3 (1991), 161-73.

⁴⁵ Arnold, 'Empedocles on Etna' (1852), Act II, lines 358-9.

⁴⁶ Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, II.VII.

active moments are relatively still and involve looking and interpreting: Jude assumes a pose of fixed reflectivity when gazing at Christminster, or reading, or watching others. For Howe, 'what is essential in *Jude*, surviving and deepening in memory, is a series of moments rather than a series of actions. These moments...tend to resemble snapshots rather than moving pictures'.⁴⁸

These spots of 'stagnant time' (*JO*, 3.I) in incessant motion are integral to the disjointed perspective and so interrupt the flow of the narrative that time, no longer sequential, ceases to function. The terror of temporal annihilation was a topical issue, Wilde later addressing 'the paralyzing immobility of...life' in *De Profundis* (1905):

this immobile quality...seems to communicate itself to those external forces, the very essence of whose existence is ceaseless change...And in the sphere of thought, no less than in the sphere of time, motion is no more.⁴⁹

In *Jude the Obscure*, these temporal vacuums and moments of specular fixity appear to contradict the irrepressible momentum of the interminable journeys, but, as Jude says,

'There is more going on than meets the eye of a man walking through the streets. All that silence and absence of goings-on is the stillness of infinite motion - the sleep of the spinning-top.' (*JO*, 2.VI)

Lifted verbatim from *Sartor Resartus* - 'In thy eyes...have we not...half-fancied that their stillness was but the rest of infinite motion, the *sleep* of a spinning-top?'⁵⁰ - the enormous energy behind this 'creeping paralysis' (*JO*, 6.I) is voiced in Sue's visual analogy where intellect and religion 'stand stock-still, like two rams butting each other' (*JO*, 3.IV).

Inert activity is epitomized by the stationary traveller in the moving train. Somerset equates the 'march of the mind' with 'the steam ship and the railway, and the

⁴⁷ See Conchita Díez-Medrano, 'Chance and Circularity in Hardy's *Tess* and *Jude* Compared', *Estudios Humanísticos Filología*, 16 (1994), 49-61.

⁴⁸ Irving Howe, *Thomas Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1967), p. 145. On the importance of memory in *JO*, as well as light and darkness, and the Bible, see Alexander Fischler, 'A Kinship with Job: Obscurity and Remembrance in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*', *English and Germanic Philology*, 84 (Oct 1985), 515-33.

⁴⁹ Wilde, *De Profundis*, p. 64-5. In this work, Wilde provides an apologia for his earlier conduct (which culminated in a prison sentence), claiming to have stood 'in symbolic relations to the art and culture of my age' (p. 89). See also Terrence Wright, 'Space, Time, and Paradox: The Sense of History in Hardy's Last Novels', *Essays and Studies*, 44 (1991), 41-52. See also the chapter above on *PBE*, pp. 32-3.

⁵⁰ Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, I.III.

thoughts that shake mankind' (*La*, Ch. 11),⁵¹ and Ruskin despises the locomotive because it deprives man of 'the nobler characteristics of his humanity' by so appropriating his perceptual sensitivity that the eye cannot 'admire anything'.⁵² When things are perceived, they are stark and bleak; no delight is taken in the external world, and thus Hardy 'wilfully deprives himself'⁵³ of his strengths by practising such a limiting and limited visual range. But he does more than deprive himself; his characters suffer too, and everything that exists in the novel, not only Jude, is insinuated in the 'obscure' ambiguity of the title's⁵⁴ intimation of visual incapacitation.⁵⁵ What Hardy later saw as the threat of 'a new Dark Age' (*LLE*, p. 56) nears completion.

And so our dreary hero, of 'dark complexion, with dark harmonizing eyes...black beard...[and] black hair' (*JO*, 2.I), is pushed into a 'wide dark world' (*JO*, 5.III) darkened further by the intense introspection of its nominal perceivers:

The low-lying lands...were frosty now, and the extensive seed-fields were bare of colour and produce. The pair, however, were so absorbed in their own situation that their surroundings were little in their consciousness. (*JO*, 5.I)

Hardy may be responding to Crabbe's examination of the dependence of natural beauty on the subjective state of the beholder,⁵⁶ for if watchers are 'absorb'd by their peculiar cares, / The vacant eye on viewless matter glares'.⁵⁷ *Jude the Obscure* and 'The Lover's Journey' (1812) find two sets of lovers so involved in their private dream that Crabbe's semi-psychological mist and Hardy's sheen-like frost obfuscate the real world. 'The

⁵¹ For a discussion of the railway in Hardy see Simon Gatrell, *Thomas Hardy: The Proper Study of Mankind* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), pp. 167-71. The chapter on *RN* above looks more closely at the 'March of Mind' concept. In his introduction to *Middlemarch* (1871; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), pp. 7-22, W.J. Harvey, discussing the social range of Eliot's analysis, refers to 'the various forces of social change and upheaval', particularly 'the coming of the railways; this is a world on the move' (p. 20).

⁵² *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: George Allen, 1903-12), VIII, 59.

⁵³ Edmund Gosse, *Cosmopolis*, I (Jan 1896), 60-9; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 253-9 (I, 255).

⁵⁴ One perspective afforded by the 'obscure' reference is that of a specified figure who, battling against insuperable odds to realize an ideal ambition, is doomed to defeat at the hands of an unenlightened society. From an entirely different perspective, as one alluded to in the original title, 'The Simpletons', Jude is the 'fool' spoken of so often, an idealist who cannot comprehend the vanity and impossibility of implementing and actualizing his dream within the context of a hostile society. The shifting of titles draws attention to the idealistic blindness of both protagonists in desiring a private life independent of circumstantial values. See 'The Recalcitrants' (*CP*, 389), which preserves another form of the novel's title.

⁵⁵ The *Oxford English Dictionary* offers 'enveloped in darkness', 'hardly perceptible to the eye', 'devoid or deficient in light...dim, gloomy, dismal'.

⁵⁶ The most characteristic expression of this preoccupation perhaps belongs to Coleridge: 'O Lady! we receive but what we give, / And in our life alone does Nature live' ('Dejection: An Ode' (1802), in *Coleridge: Poetical Works*, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), lines 47-8).

⁵⁷ Crabbe, 'The Lover's Journey', lines 1-3, 8-9.

vacant eye', though it hovers over phenomena, is dysfunctional and annihilative, leaving the material world 'bare of colour', a blank screen, a dead wasteland.⁵⁸ Characters' obsessive engagement with inscape rather than landscape imparts to their physical vision the 'cold listless lustre of the dead man's eye' ('On the Way', *CP*, 581).⁵⁹

The visual cruelty of *Jude the Obscure* lies in the outer world's refusal to conform to the perceiver's subjective wants as Hardy enforces the 'Course of Modern Thought' which sees the 'essential distinction' between 'Mind and Matter' as a 'logical distinction', a provocative adjective.⁶⁰ One moment, we look through the Mind of Jude's rose-coloured spectacles; the next, the narrator confiscates them from us and reveals the Matter. But while we perceive the ironic dislocation, Jude cannot rid himself of the glorifying lenses and, horrified, we watch him blundering around in a reality misconstrued from 'the eye of faith' (*JO*, 1.XI). During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the consensus was that creative minds ought to shun what was ugly in every day life;⁶¹ Jude's obsequious loyalty to this prescription shows it up for the sham it is and exposes him as a fool, a 'simpleton'. The Realist subverts the Idealist as Hardy, playing devil's advocate, pretends to undermine all that he has hitherto argued. What was only hinted at in 'the desolate drab' of Flintcomb-Ash, 'sublime in its dreariness' (*TD*, Ch. XLII), achieves undiluted expression in *Jude the Obscure*.⁶²

As Bullen has shown,⁶³ French realist painters were popular with British artists during the late 1880s, Bastien-Lepage's method, devoid of 'the appearance of artifice',⁶⁴ being deemed invaluable. The literary equivalent, too, did 'not recoil before ugliness & miseries' (*LN*, I, 1632),⁶⁵ but critics found this intense concentration 'on what is ugly in Nature' invidious, and accused the perpetrators of being 'not enough in love with

⁵⁸ Cp. Coleridge's mourning over the loss of feeling the power of seen beauty. In a 'wan and heartless mood', he looks upon the beauty of clouds, stars and sky: 'And still I gaze - and with how blank an eye!... / I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!' ('Dejection: An Ode' (1802), lines 25, 22, 30, 38). Coleridge appreciates that 'from the soul itself must issue forth / A light, a glory' (lines 53-4) which will invigorate the perceiving eye. This 'light' is what Hardy denies his present characters in their experience of observed phenomena: 'Joy'.

⁵⁹ Cp. when 'the pool glittered like a dead man's eye' (*FMC*, V) after Oak loses his sheep, and the 'cold corpse-eyed luminousness' (*W*, XLII) of the Hintocks.

⁶⁰ Lewes, 'The Course of Modern Thought', p. 318.

⁶¹ See Ian Maclaren, 'Ugliness in Fiction', *Literature*, 1 (1897), 80-1.

⁶² See Barbara DeMille, 'Cruel Illusions: Nietzsche, Conrad, Hardy, and the "Shadowy Ideal"', *Studies in English Literature*, 30:4 (Autumn 1990), 697-74.

⁶³ Bullen, *The Expressive Eye*, p. 243.

⁶⁴ Kenneth McConkey, 'The Bourguereau of the Naturalists: Bastien Le-page and British Art', *Art History*, 1 (1978), 371-82, (p. 378).

⁶⁵ Eugene-Melchior de Vogue, 'De la Littérature Realiste, a propos du Roman Russe', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 75 (May 15, 1886), 288-309.

beauty'.⁶⁶ Wessex of 1895 embodies the changes then sweeping Britain and Europe,⁶⁷ and finds Gosse addressing 'the resignation of the old dreamy element of beauty' in the popular culture in general, and the 'fortuitous absence of beauty'⁶⁸ in *Jude the Obscure*'s 'sombre colouring'⁶⁹ in particular. Hardy, Gosse continues, convinces that 'mere observation will not produce this illusion of absolute truth',⁷⁰ and proceeds to hold up Zola's 'deplorable fiasco of *La Terre*'⁷¹ (which appeared seven years earlier) as suitable testimony. It seemed a "natural" connection to make; *Jude the Obscure* continued to excite comparisons with Zola's work, and was acrimoniously berated as a repellent emulation of French realism.⁷²

Such accusations are understandable, especially when Jude, setting himself aside to really look at *la terre*, validates the narrative point of view: "'How ugly it is here!'" (*JO*, 1.II). Visually unpleasant episodes are exaggerated so that, when confronted with Jude's idealizing subjectivism, the effect is all the more jarring. Vulgar banalities constantly breach the protective buffer afforded by a dream existence, and it is usually when Jude is sublimely abstracted that reality asserts itself most coarsely:

In his deep concentration...he [stood] looking at the ground as though the future were thrown thereon by a magic lantern. On a sudden something smacked him sharply in the ear, and he became aware that a soft cold substance had been flung at him...A glance told him what it was.
(*JO*, 1.VI)⁷³

In this painful transition from passive, spiritual visioning to active, physical seeing of crudities, Arabella's gesture disrupts Jude's current mood as she will later disrupt the future he was considering, and her Circe-like⁷⁴ power engenders a second cycle of

⁶⁶ Wilfred Maynell, *The Modern School of Art*, 3 vols (1887-8), III, 31.

⁶⁷ See Phillip Mallett, 'Jude the Obscure: A Farewell to Wessex', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XI:3 (Oct 1995), 48-59.

⁶⁸ Gosse, *TH:CA*, I, 255.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, I, 256.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 255.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² See the anonymous review in *The World* (Nov 13, 1895); rpt, *TH:CA*, I, 237-8: 'Mr Hardy, in short, seems to have become especially enamoured of the methods of...Zola of *La Terre* and Tolstoi the decadent sociologist' (I, 238).

⁷³ For a lively yet erudite consideration of this episode, see the chapter, 'What Does Arabella Donn Throw?' in John Sutherland's *Is Heathcliff a Murderer? Great Puzzles in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). Arabella teases Jude's sexuality by flinging what now belongs to 'a fat, porcine eunuch'.

⁷⁴ The wandering Jude/Odysseus is waylaid by Arabella/Circe who not only drugs him with alcohol and seduces him, but is closely associated with pigs and keeps him in thrall through his bestial/piggish (sexual) desires. Her father is a pig-breeder, she is first introduced when washing pigs' innards, herself slaughters one, and the pair move into a house which backs on to a butcher's. Arabella's fleshly invitation to Jude is also apposite given her promiscuity, a 'pig' being a slang expression for female genitals, the implication being that she is "throwing around" more than just a piece of (masculine) flesh. Moreover, Gregor's suggestion that where *Jude the Obscure* ends *The Rainbow* begins (*The Great Web: The Form of Hardy's Major Fiction* (London: Faber & Faber, 1974), p. 233) is particularly

sight-blindness-sight. 'A glance' identifies the fleshy object and the graphic realism of the chitterling-washing, but it is Arabella herself who occults and progressively dims his view:

It had been no vestal who chose *that* missile...[H]e saw this with his intellectual eye, just for a short fleeting while, as by the light of a falling lamp one might momentarily see an inscription on a wall being enshrouded in darkness. (ib.)⁷⁵

The entire episode is typical of Hardy's perceptual experimentalism in a novel which mirrors the conditional process of Jude's image-projecting mind. Jude's present reality is an emanation from his 'late irradiate soul' (*CP*, 393) cast onto the world screen,⁷⁶ and the magic-lantern impressions are so hypnotic - he stands mesmerized, oblivious to contiguous actualities - that he pursues the magical dream in the real world. In this enchanted state he fails to see the outer realm as something to be exploited and enmeshes himself in a nightmare. He needs to wake up - we see this - but he remains 'enshrouded in darkness' to the very end.

Hardy's interpretation of this tendency may address De Quincey's speculations on 'meditative poetry', one of 'the many subjective exercises of the mind':

The problem before the writer is... 'to pass through a prism & radiate into distinct elements what previously had been even to himself but dim & confused ideas intermixed with each other... The skill with which detention ... is given to the... external projection to what is internal, *outline to what*

pertinent in this context. For instance, at the start of *The Rainbow*, the narrator describes the perception Mrs Brangwen has of none other than Mr and Mrs Hardy at the Hall: 'they had their own Odyssey enacting itself. Penelope and Ulysses before them, and Circe and the swine and the endless web' (*The Rainbow* (London: Methuen, 1915; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1949), Ch. 1.1), a suggestive final noun. Seen. 86 of *W* chapter.

⁷⁵ Edward Arlington Robinson's review of the novel, *The Critic* (Nov 23, 1895); rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 244, is structured as a poem. See particularly the lines, 'with searching feet, through dark circuitous ways, / I plunged and stumbled', until, through 'a magic twilight', a river is heard 'as in a dream', and the cottage lights of Wessex are seen 'with many a changing gleam'. Perhaps this passage in the novel also anticipates T.S. Eliot's comparable image in 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' (1917), in *T.S. Eliot: Selected Poems* (London and Boston: Faber & Faber, 1961; rpt. 1986): 'It is impossible to say just what I mean! / But as if a magic lantern through the nerves in patterns on a screen' (lines 104-5). For a discussion on the relevance of 'that missile', see James M. Harding, 'The Signification of Arabella's Missile: Feminine Sexuality, Masculine Anxiety and Revision in *Jude the Obscure*', *Journal of Narrative Technique*, 26:1 (1996), 85-111. Harding shows how the revisions of the scene involving the thrown pizzle are crucial to Hardy's construction of female sexuality in the novel.

⁷⁶ At night, Oak, 'beneath the screen of closed eyelids, was busy with fancies, and full of movement, like a river flowing rapidly under its ice' (*FMC*, VIII). When Giles faces losing the lease, he feels that things are slipping away from him 'as if they were painted on a magic-lantern slide' (*W*, XIII). The idea was present during the first half of the century, Charlotte Brontë using the image in *Jane Eyre* (1847), ed. Q.D. Leavis (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), during the 'gipsy' episode in order to convey the subjective separation of the individual from the objective "others" in society. The disguised Rochester muses aloud, "'I wonder what thoughts were busy in your heart during all the hours you sit in yonder room with the fine people flitting before you like shapes in a magic-lantern'" (Ch. 19). Hardy may have been thinking of Tennyson's consideration of the saving power of 'fancies, which aver / That all thy motions gently pass / Athwart a plane of molten glass' (*In Memoriam* (1850), in *The Complete Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1898), XV, 9-11). See Cintra Whitehead, 'Construct, Image, and Prediction: A View of Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* through George Kelly's *Psychology of Personal Constructs*', *Constructive Criticism*, 1:2 (June 1991), 129-49.

is fluxionary & body to what is vague...depends on the command over language'. (LN, I, 869)⁷⁷

Hardy's solution makes these 'dim & confused ideas' 'eidetic', that is, 'producible visual images that have almost photographic accuracy'. The seer "'projects" the image onto the screen and then behaves as if the pictures were actually there...It seems, therefore, that eidetic images "are seen in the literal sense of the word"'.⁷⁸ The 'future' glimpsed in the lantern of *Jude the Obscure*, the 'magic mirror' of 'Moments of Vision' (CP, 352) and 'the Mage's mirror' of *The Dynasts* are all proleptic instances of 'the running of Time's far glass' in 'Near Lanivet, 1872' (CP, 366), and their visions the phantom impressions raised by the poet-seer who, gifted with 'a mind with sight' ('The House of Silence', CP, 413), comes to his power as *magus* in the precincts of his own mind.

According to Paulin, a contemporary encyclopaedia found 'a lantern body to contain the source of light and the reflectors, an optical system and a slot to accommodate the slide-frame'.⁷⁹ Hardy translates the human frame as the 'lantern body' with its soul as the 'source of light', and if man is little more than one of the numerous 'painted shapes' or illusive 'figments', as the Pities say, and the lantern-show just an optical illusion, then so is life. Man is a phantom, a puppet,⁸⁰ a walking shadow galvanized into life by some conjuror:

Within my maker must abide,
Since none in myself can ever be,

One thin as a phasm on a lantern-slide

⁷⁷ From De Quincey's 'Style', in *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*, ed. David Masson, 14 vols (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1889-90; London: Adam and Charles Black, 1897), X, 226-7.

⁷⁸ Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation* (1966), pp. 535-6. See Hardy's 'After a Romantic Day' (CP, 599) which explains the process of production, the weathered face of the land forming 'a convenient sheet whereon / The visions of his mind were drawn'. See Tom Paulin's chapter, 'Eidetic Images', in *Thomas Hardy: The Poetry of Perception* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1975), pp. 121-45. Blake was renowned for this ability, his tree full of angels being the most famous example. See also Eustacia's use of this vision in the chapter on RN, pp. 111-3.

⁷⁹ Quoted by Paulin, *Thomas Hardy: The Poetry of Perception*, p. 189.

⁸⁰ Hardy refers to Jude as 'my poor puppet' (LY, p. 41; Nov 1895), and in 'Thoughts at Midnight' (CP, 817) voices his dismay at mankind 'Acting like puppets'. Lionel Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy* (1894; rpt. London: The Bodley Head, 1923), discussing 'Country Folk' in chapter IV, explains that 'they never lose their reality, their hold upon life or truth, in the creator's hands: not one of them is set up, a puppet of the stage' (p. 125). On the other hand, David Cecil, in chapter 4 of *Hardy the Novelist* (London: Constable, 1943), calls Hardy's characters puppets, bemoans the fact that they are not treated as such in JO, and then - in a nice irony - accuses Hardy of being muddled. Rosemary Sumner, *Thomas Hardy: Psychological Novelist* (London: Macmillan, 1981), says that 'Hardy's characters are puppets, totally insignificant against an overwhelming background' (p. 101). The Spirit of the Years refers to humans as 'flesh-hinged mannikins' (D, I, Fore Scene), and warns Spirit Sinister, 'scorn not puppetry so skilled' (D, I.I.vi). Shade of the Earth agrees but pin-points the incongruity: 'Yea; that they feel, and puppetry remain, / Is an owned flaw in [Nature's] consistency' (ib.). During his madness, the hero of Tennyson's *Maud: A Monodrama* (1855), declares and then questions: 'We are puppets... / Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen hand at a game / That pushes us off from the board, and others ever succeed?' (I. IV. v). Wilde sees Bosie as 'a puppet worked by some secret and unseen hand to bring terrible events to a terrible issue' (*De Profundis*, p. 43).

Shone forth in the dark upon some dim sheet,
 And by none but its showman vivified.
 ('A Plaint to Man', *CP*, 266)⁸¹

Through the mirror-reflected light source, objects externalize a single 'transparency', a 'photograph or picture on glass or other transparent substance, intended to be seen by transmitted light'.⁸² This partially explains the significance of 'That mirror / Which makes of men a transparency' in 'Moments of Vision' (*CP*, 352), and harkens back to the Shelleyan soul-lamp/'supernatural lamp' inside the young Jude.⁸³

He ran about and smiled outwardly at his inward thoughts...smiled with that singularly beautiful irradiation which is seen to spread on young faces...as if a supernatural lamp were held inside their transparent natures. (*JO*, I.IV)⁸⁴

Though this tenacious light is fragile 'In the Seventies' (*CP*, 389),

...nought could darken or destroy it,
 Locked in me
 Though as delicate as lamp-worm's lucency,

the mid-nineties finds the light of optimistic youth snuffed out.

Hardy's current susceptibilities attracted him to Schopenhauer's philosophical disquisition on pessimism, *The World as Will and Idea* (1819), which, like *Jude the*

⁸¹ In *The Dynasts*, the magic lantern is a symbol of the predestined aspect of existence, and even Napoleon

Moved like a figure on a lantern-slide,
 Which, much amazing uninitiate eyes,
 The all-compelling crystal pane but drags
 Whither the showman wills. (*D*, I. IV. v)

And in the light of the sheer modernity of *JO*, one can compare this image of existence with Lawrence's. Gazing upon the snow-bound mountains, Ursula sees 'another world, like views on a magic lantern...There was a shadowy unreal Ursula, a whole shadow-play of an unreal life...It was as unreal, and circumscribed, as a magic-lantern show...She wished it could be gone forever, like a lantern-slide which was broken' (*Women in Love* (1921; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), Ch. XXIX).

⁸² Paulin, *Thomas Hardy: The Poetry of Perception*, p. 189.

⁸³ In 'Ode: Intimations to Immortality' (1802-4), in *Wordsworth: Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 2nd edn., 1936; rpt. 1974), Wordsworth adopted the Platonic theory of pre-existence to explain the 'celestial light' which surrounded his childhood, and, in a section which anticipates Jude's speculations beneath his straw hat, wrote that 'Heaven lies about us in our infancy' before 'Shades of the prison house begin to close / Upon the growing Boy' (lines 66-8). Arnold's reflective soul-vision as expressed by Empedocles is rather more fragmentary than monistic in inclination. See esp. Act I, Scene II, lines 77-85, of 'Empedocles on Etna' (1852).

⁸⁴ In 'The Youth Who Carried a Light' (*CP*, 422), the phenomena of nature are obvious presences,
 Yet these were not the spectacles at all that he coned,
 But an inner one, giving out rays.

Such was the thing in his eye, walking there,
 The very and visible thing.

In 'Midnight on the Great Western' (*CP*, 465), the 'roof-lamp's oily flame' is reflected in the key around the 'listless' child's neck 'That twinkled gleams of the lamp's sad beams / Like a living thing'.

Obscure, proposes a theory of perception by recourse to the magic-lantern. The Will of the radiating body discovers its 'clearest and fullest objectification' in man:

As the magic-lantern shows many different pictures, which are all made visible by one and the same light, so in all the multifarious phenomena which fill the world...only *one* will manifest itself, of which everything is the visibility, the objectivity, and which remain unmoved in the midst of change; it alone is the thing-in-itself; all objects are manifestations, or, to speak the language of Kant, phenomena.⁸⁵

Such reasoning is distinctly Berkeleian: 'all that exists for knowledge, and therefore this whole world, is only object in relation to subject, perception of a perceiver, in a word, idea'.⁸⁶ Schopenhauer's epistemology concedes to imaginative freedom when 'the light of knowledge penetrates into the workshop of the blindly active Will, and illuminates the vegetative functions of the human organism', but only when the artist disengages the 'blindly active Will' does he experience 'clairvoyance', a 'pure perception', a 'clear vision of the world'.⁸⁷ Such literal sight is proscribed in *Jude the Obscure* precisely because the hero is a victim of the deterministic tyranny of Immanent Will, that 'First Cause [which] worked automatically like a somnambulist, and not reflectively like a sage' (*JO*, 6.III).⁸⁸ The perceiver is reduced to an automaton in turn.

With the explicit, perceptual disharmonies of this episode in mind, Gosse claimed that 'it is very gloomy, it is even a grimy story that Mr Hardy has at last presented', one in which the author 'concentrates his observations on the sordid and painful side of life and nature'.⁸⁹ Always sensitive to criticism, Hardy responded two days after the comment to defend his position:

The 'grimy' features of the story go to show the contrast between the ideal life a man wished to lead, and the squalid real life he was fated to lead. The throwing of the pizzle, at the supreme moment of his young dream, is to

⁸⁵ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea* (1819), trans. R.B. Haldane and J. Kemp, 3 vols (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1883; 3rd edn. 1893), I, 199-200. Schopenhauer's philosophy argues that Will, of which we have direct intuition, is the 'thing-in-itself', the only reality; it is self-conscious in man and finds its equivalent in the unconscious forces of nature. Will creates the world which is not only an illusion (as are God, free will, and the immortality of the soul) but a malignant thing. See Ernest Brennecke, *Thomas Hardy's Universe: A Study of a Poet's Mind* (London: Unwin, 1924), which examines the influence of Schopenhauer's idealism.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 3.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 197.

⁸⁸ In speaking of 'the Immanent Will and its designs', the Spirit of the Years says that 'It works unconsciously', and the Chorus of the Pities asks: 'Still thus? / Ever unconscious! / An automatic sense' (*D*, 1, Fore Scene).

⁸⁹ Edmund Gosse, 'Mr Hardy's New Novel', *St James's Gazette* (Nov 8, 1895), 4.

sharply initiate this contrast. (*LF*, p. 41; Nov 1895)⁹⁰

Hardy's unorthodox aesthetic of stark contradictions is, as Eagleton says, 'a defiant flouting of "verisimilitude" which mounts theatrical gesture upon gesture in a driving back of the boundaries of realism'.⁹¹ Hardy's formulation of this dialectic produced a fiction which was artificial yet true to life, one which withstood extreme perceptual economy, for Jude's view is not one of several which contribute to the larger perception of the author; Hardy's attitude is neither as inclusive nor as complex as before.

The pig-sticking is the starkest example of this ironic, visual disjunction, the mutual contradictions, the scaffolding behind the novel's formal inconsistency, echoing in the asymmetry of Jude's objective and subjective participation. Despite conscious attempts to distance himself, his sensitive, though pathetically futile, ministrations over the neck bristles, present him, from an unsentimental point of view, as 'a tender-hearted fool'.⁹² His inappropriate comic-grotesque kicking over of the blood pail does, however, satisfy one expectation - the juxtaposition arising from the intrusive narrative eye which neutralizes the absurdity - the accident forming 'a dismal, sordid, ugly spectacle', but only 'to those who saw it as other than an ordinary obtaining of meat' (*JO*, I.X).⁹³ Just as Jude could not comprehend 'Nature's logic' at the start, now 'the white snow, stained with the blood of his fellow-mortal, wore an illogical look to him'. The irony, directed at the perspective which 'could not see how the matter was to be mended', completely ignores that in a real, down-to-earth sense (Arabella's) it should never be 'mended'. The

⁹⁰ Kathleen R. Hoopes, 'Illusion and Reality in *Jude the Obscure*', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 12:2 (Sept 1957), 154-7, offers a concise account of the gap between Jude's dreams and experiences. Ian Gregor, 'Jude the Obscure', in *Imagined Worlds: Essays on Some English Novels and Novelists in Honour of John Butt*, ed. Maynard Mack and Ian Gregor (London: Methuen, 1968), pp. 237-56, emphasizes how the novel is concerned with an internal quest for the reality of the self. J. Hillis Miller, *Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), explains this further: 'Hardy's carefully proportioned plots express his notions of the ironic incompatibility between a man's conscious intentions, the pattern he wants to give to his life, and the actual design which is surreptitiously being created all the time by a hidden power which even makes use of a man's free acts to construct its chaste symmetries' (p. 210). George Eliot also addresses this discrepancy in young Maggie's plight in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), ed. A.S. Byatt (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979): 'Maggie...was a creature...thirsty for all knowledge: with an ear straining after dreamy music that died away and would not come near her: with a blind, unconscious yearning for something that would link together the wonderful impressions of this mysterious life and give her soul a sense of home in it. No wonder, when there is this contrast between the outward and the inward, that painful collisions come of it' (III. 5).

⁹¹ Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist literary Theory* (London: NLB, 1976; London: Verso, 1978), p. 131.

⁹² See D.B.D. Asker, "'The Birds Shall Have Some Dinner': Animals in Hardy's Fiction", *Dutch Quarterly Review of Anglo-American Letters*, 10:3 (1980), 215-9; David Jones, 'The One Believed-In Thing', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, X:3 (Oct 1994), 48-53, identifies this one truth as 'loving-kindness'. See also John Marks, 'Hardy and Kindness', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XI:1 (Feb 1995), 52-59, esp. p. 55. Hardy detested cruelty to animals.

⁹³ See Allison James, 'Piggy in the Middle: Food Symbolism and Social Relations', in *Food, Culture and History*, ed. Gerald and Valerie Mars (London: London Food Seminar, 1993), who includes an analysis of the slaughtering episode in *JO*.

final response expected from the reader is inconclusive and we are left puzzled by the logic of this consistent inconsistency.

Jude's 'ideal life' suffers unremitting attack from 'the squalid real life' of a Wessex comprising of destructive rather than sustaining values, a place of negatives, another version of 'The Everlasting No'.⁹⁴ Mentally escaping from caustically named Marygreen,⁹⁵ the child Jude casts his eyes northwards to the 'beautiful...city' (*JO*, 1.II)⁹⁶ of his dream, and though his 'strained' viewing makes a 'transparency' of the air and an image appears, the experience is equivocal: 'It was Christminster, unquestionably; either directly seen, or miraged in the peculiar atmosphere. The spectator gazed on and on' (*JO*, 1.III),⁹⁷ the curious juxtaposition of 'unquestionably' and 'miraged' forwarding Christminster as both optical illusion and literal fact. The misdirected source of Jude's optical pretensions is clarified when the narrator, observing that 'near objects [had] put on the hues and shapes of chimaeras', applies Hylas's question: 'What difference is there between real things, and chimeras formed by the imagination, or the visions of a dream, since they are equally in the mind?'⁹⁸ An uncontested response which resolves the conundrum fails to present itself. What is certain, however, is that Jude is embroiled in misperceptions of the real, for, according to Worsley's discourse on objective pluralism, multiplicity of vision, 'not only are all our perceptions faulty records, but they are also faulty records of chimeras, not of realities' (*LN*, II, 2441).⁹⁹

By clinging on to a dreamy filter, Jude visually incapacitates himself and loses that exceptional, sympathetic awareness which let him notice the earthworms. He is kin

⁹⁴ Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, II.VII.

⁹⁵ See Andrew Hamer, 'Marygreen', in *KM 80: A Birthday Album for Kenneth Muir, Tuesday, 5 May 1987* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, n.d.), pp. 62-5.

⁹⁶ The fact that this is a quotation from Arnold's 'The Literary Influence of Academics' (which was first published in the *Cornhill* in 1864, then republished in his *Essays in Criticism* in 1865) should alert us to the irony. Arnold presents Oxford's 'dreaming spires' as home to the real scholar, whatever their financial circumstances, and it seems to be this aspect which Hardy takes to task most severely in *JO*.

⁹⁷ Once Jude has finished his anti-Wordsworthian gazing (which brings not 'wealth' but delusion to 'that inward eye') and lost his ability to look with the love and sympathy of 'a more comprehensive soul' ('Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*' (1805), in *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. Michael Mason (London and New York: Longman, 1992), pp. 55-87; Appendix, pp. 87-93 (p. 71)) on other lives, the influence of the Romantics is truly at an end. Modernism takes over, and only ten years later Lawrence delineates the view of Anna Brangwen in similar terms: 'She was straining to see something beyond...and what could she see? A faint, gleaming horizon, a long way off, and a rainbow like an archway...Must she be moving thither?' (*The Rainbow*, Ch. VI).

⁹⁸ George Berkeley, *Three Dialogues of Hylas and Philonous* (1713), ed. Robert Merrihew Adams (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1979), p. 68.

⁹⁹ A. Worsley, *Concepts of Monism* (London, 1907), pp. 316-30. See Patricia Gullivan's 'Science and Art in *Jude the Obscure*', in *Novels of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Anne Smith (New York: Barnes & Noble; London: Vision Press, 1979), pp. 126-44, which explores Hardy's reading in contemporary psychology, especially Maudsley, and its influence on the presentation of hallucinations, perceptual disorders, delusions and neurotic tendencies.

to the children in Schopenhauer's *Studies in Pessimism* who not only 'view the world through the medium of...ready made ideas' (*LN*, II, 1797)¹⁰⁰ gleaned from books, but who 'either see things in a false light, or try in vain to *remodel the world* to suit their views, & so enter upon false paths' (*LN*, II, 1798).¹⁰¹ Conjectured realities supplant actual realities, and from this point on he is, in Wordsworth's sense, a 'lost Man' who 'on visionary views would fancy feed, / Till his eye streamed with tears',¹⁰² he cannot even contemplate that his vision may 'fade into the light of common day'.¹⁰³

The more Jude feeds his ambitions on illusion, the more Hardy shows him perceiving imperfectly; only peripheral observers, Arabella and the narrator, see clearly. As Page notes, the paradox is unavoidable, for 'if detachment brings discovery and revelation, involvement can entail a loss of vision',¹⁰⁴ and so much 'faith' does Jude have in his imagined creation that his preconceptions distort and 'remodel the world': 'he saw nothing of the real city...When he passed objects out of harmony with its general expression he had allowed his eyes to slip over them as if he did not see them' (*JO*, 2.I).¹⁰⁵ After all,

Existence is either ordered in a certain way, or it is not so ordered, and conjectures which harmonize best with experience are removed above all comparison with other conjectures which do not so harmonize. (*GP*, p. 49)

The adult Jude refuses to notice 'the deadly animosity of the contemporary logic and vision' (*JO*, 2.II) ('Nature's logic' is superseded by Culture's), but this self-inflicted debility is a fallacy and he subconsciously registers the incoherence. Thus, during 'the afternoon on which he awoke from his dream' and everything bursts 'like an iridescent soap-bubble', he views the 'delusive precincts' from the 'true perspective' afforded by 'reasoned enquiry' (*JO*, 2.VI).¹⁰⁶ He concedes that 'what at night had been perfect and

¹⁰⁰ Arthur Schopenhauer, *Studies in Pessimism*, selected and trans. T. Bailey Saunders (London, 1891), p. 95. Hardy was reading this in 1891.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁰² Wordsworth, 'Lines: Left upon a Seat in a Yew-Tree' (1798), lines 44-6.

¹⁰³ Wordsworth, 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality' (1807), line 76.

¹⁰⁴ Norman Page, *Thomas Hardy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 82.

¹⁰⁵ Cp. Pierston who takes to 'veiling in [Avice II] all that did not harmonize with his sense of metempsychosis' and 'all sordid details were disregarded' (*WB*, 2.VIII).

¹⁰⁶ Michael Farrady described a soap bubble as the most beautiful thing on earth (see *Selected Correspondence of Michael Farraday*, ed. L. Pearce Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), I, 513). Dickens also uses the image in *Hard Times* (1854), ed. Paul Schlicke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), to describe a confounded Bounderby who is left 'swelling like an immense soap-bubble, without its beauty' (3.VII).

ideal was by day the more or less defective real' (*JO*, 2.II); yes, the buildings have 'betrayed' him and their apparent symmetry is artificial. Jude's tragedy derives from his blindness to the inconsonance between the images he projects and the objects upon which they are superimposed; for him 'fancy shapes, as fancy can',¹⁰⁷ but

we must distinguish between real vision and fantasy even though their results are identical: fantasy involves a separation between what the mind sees and the environment that serves as a projection screen for it, but vision, in certain cases, possesses an active power to transform fact.¹⁰⁸

'As if we could destroy facts by refusing to see them' (*LN*, II, 1939).¹⁰⁹ Jude believes he can so 'destroy' and 'transform fact'; Hardy sneers at such naivety, and the distinction remains.

In denying this intransigence, Jude precipitates a dissociation of the self:

He began to be impressed with the isolation of his own personality, as with a self-spectre, the sensation being that of one who walked but could not make himself seen or heard...and, seeming almost his own ghost, gave his thoughts to the other ghostly presences with which the nooks were haunted. (*JO*, 2.I)

This disembodied self draws on Pater's Leonardo, 'a *revenant*...a ghost out of another age, in a world too coarse to touch his faint sensibilities very closely; dreaming, in a worn-out society',¹¹⁰ and Hardy's own 'melancholy satisfaction' in

dying, so to speak, before one is out of the flesh; by which I mean putting on the manners of ghosts...and taking their views of surrounding things...I have unconsciously the habit of regarding the scene as if I were a spectre not solid enough to influence my environment; only fit to behold. (*EL*, p. 275; June 1888)

But not to be beholden. Personal distancing becomes authorial distancing whereby Hardy, though not excluding himself from the scene, is rather 'being excluded and returning as a sort of disembodied presence, a *revenant*, someone of a different

¹⁰⁷ Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, LXXX, line 5.

¹⁰⁸ Paulin, *Thomas Hardy*, p. 192.

¹⁰⁹ Hallam Tennyson, *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir* (London, 1897), I, 278.

¹¹⁰ Pater, *The Renaissance*, p. 90.

substance who cannot mix with the human materials he observes'.¹¹¹ Such detachment permits a wider, more objective perspective on events which encourage subjective sympathy:

At a distance in time and yet present as the events occur, a cold observer, spatially detached, seeing without being seen, and yet at the same time able to share the feelings of the characters, see with their eyes, and hear with their ears - a paradoxical combination of proximity and distance, presence and absence, sympathy and coldness, characterizes the narrator whose role Hardy plays.¹¹²

Even to exist as a thought, a passing mind-image - the only existence we can have in relation to others¹¹³ - we must be seen. Though Jude remains 'obscure' to others because he 'could not make himself seen', he not only exists for the reader, we imag(in)e him, but is realized as an existence: we watch him watching.¹¹⁴ In some respects, Jude is a spectral echo of Hardy, and when Sue defines Christminster as "'a place full of fetichists and ghost-seers'", it provokes that self-knowing comment from the author and his mouthpiece: "'Well, that's just what I am too," he said. "I am fearful of life, spectre-seeing always"' (JO, 3.IV).¹¹⁵

The experience is analagous to an eidetic horror as obsessive memory occults immediate sights and envelops mind and body in confusing corporealized abstractions, and since memories are vulnerable,¹¹⁶ so is the reality they create. As Luriya explains, for *The Mind of a Mnemonist* there is 'no real borderline between perceptions and emotions...[I]mages of the external world...blend and become part of diffuse experiences'.¹¹⁷ Jude, inhabiting a mnemonic realm, peoples Christminster with the

¹¹¹ Frank O'Connor, *The Mirror in the Roadway: A Study of the Modern Novel* (London: Hamilton, 1957), pp. 249-50. Cp. the feelings of Teufelsdröckh: 'Invisible yet impenetrable walls, as of Enchantment, divided me from all living...The men and women around me...were but Figures...In the midst of their crowded streets...I walked solitary' (*Sartor Resartus*, II. VII); and Spirit Sinister: 'One needs must be a ghost / To move here in the midst 'twixt host and host!' (D, 3.VII.vii). See Mary Jacobus, 'Hardy's Magian Retrospect', *Essays in Criticism*, 32 (1982), 258-79, who discusses the encounters or dialogues between Hardy and his other ghostly self. It seemed a topical concern, Leslie Stephen, 'Dreams and Realities', in *An Agnostic's Apology, and Other Essays* (London: Smith & Elder, 1893; rpt. Bristol: Thoemmes, 1991), pp. 86-126, describing how the loss of someone close makes us know 'that we shall move about like ghosts, watching, but not sharing in, the panorama of existence' (p. 112).

¹¹² Miller, *Distance and Desire*, p. 55.

¹¹³ Cp. the argument of the idealist: 'you cannot hope to convince me that I myself am simply a change in yourself, or that my body is only a fleeting image in your mind' (G.H. Lewes, 'The Course of Modern Thought', *Fortnightly Review*, XXI (1877), 317-27 (p. 321)).

¹¹⁴ Cp. 'Inside this exterior, over which the eye might have roved as over a thing scarcely percipient, almost inorganic, there was the record of a pulsing life' (TD, XLII).

¹¹⁵ Arnold uses the metaphor to express 'Growing Old' (1867), the 'last stage' being 'When we are frozen up within, and quite / The phantom of ourselves', a 'hollow ghost' (lines 31-4).

¹¹⁶ Alan Shelston, 'Thomas Hardy and the Literature of Memory', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XII:3 (Oct 1996), 45-56 (p. 53).

¹¹⁷ R.A. Luriya, *The Mind of a Mnemonist: A Little Book about a Vast Memory*, trans. Lyn Solotaroff (New York: Basic; London: Jonathan Cape, 1969; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 77.

spirits of departed dignitaries whose recalled significance has more reality for him than the real populace:

He had read and learnt...of the worthies...whose souls had haunted [these walls]...Some of them, by the accidents of his reading, loomed out in his fancy disproportionately large...The scientists and philologists followed on in his mind-sight in an odd impossible combination...Jude found himself speaking out loud...like an actor in a melodrama who apostrophizes the audience on either side of the footlights. (*JO*, 2.I)¹¹⁸

Jude's specular gesture, a reflective summoning not a spontaneous creation, is a melodramatic parody of imaginative address, an 'absurdity' which is cruelly reduced a few lines later by the intrusion from the shadows of 'a real and local voice'. And although related tangentially to the more realistic details, these 'infinite spectacles featuring foremost / Under my sight' embrace the observer 'in a tide of visions', 'a ghost-like gauze' which obscures the 'substantial'. 'Before the intenser / Stare of the mind' ('In Front of the Landscape' *CP*, 246) they reign supreme.

Haunted by mind-phantoms, cut off from the root of his being, an intellectual half-caste, Jude ranks among Arnold's 'aliens...wandering between two worlds, / One dead, the other powerless to be born'.¹¹⁹ Without a moment's respite, he rolls 'from change to change', and what eventually 'wears out' his life is the combined effect of sharply visualized 'repeated shocks' which 'Exhaust the energy of the strongest souls'.¹²⁰ Constantly questioning his own identity and relation to current systems, Jude is forced to confront the challenging consciousness that glistens in the distance, a trait born from Hardy's familiarity with Arnold's 'The Literary Influence of Academics' (1864).¹²¹

¹¹⁸ "Whose 'melodrama', we may ask, is 'apostrophizing the audience', whose self-consciousness of 'absurdity' is brought to our attention?" (Peter Widdowson, *Thomas Hardy* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1996), p. 69). Cp. Tennyson's *In Memoriam*: Jude is similarly lost in quasi-subjective 'shadowy thoroughfares of thought' and surrounded by ghostly 'crowds that stream from yawning doors' of his soul (*LXX*, lines 8-9).

¹¹⁹ Arnold, 'Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse' (1855), lines 85-6. Here Arnold addresses, not as analytically, perhaps, but with individual urgency, the same uncertainties appreciated by others. Carlyle already knew in 1831 that 'the Old has passed away but, alas, the New appears not in its stead' ('Characteristics' (1831), in *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, ed. H.D. Traill, 5 vols (London: Chapman & Hall, 1899; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1969), III, 1-43 (p. 32)); and J.S. Mill also saw in the 1830s that 'Mankind have outgrown old institutions and old doctrines, and have not yet acquired new ones' ('The Spirit of the Age' (1831), in *The Collected Works of J.S. Mill*, 33 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), XXII, 228-34 (p. 230)). In 1901, Hardy noted, 'Leslie Stephen says: "The old ideas have become obsolete, and the new are not yet constructed"' (*LY*, p. 88; May 1901). Given this lot, there is only one possible conclusion. The hero of 'Empedocles on Etna' (1852) charts the misery of those destined to

Be miserably banded to and fro

Like a sea-wave...

...and only death

Can cut his oscillations short, and so

Bring him to poise. There is no other way. (Act II, lines 230-4)

Whether Jude is ever brought 'to poise' through death, however, is more problematic.

¹²⁰ Arnold, 'The Scholar-Gipsy' (1853), lines 142-5.

¹²¹ The essay was first published in the *Cornhill* in 1864, then republished in Arnold's *Essays in Criticism* in 1865. For present references, see *The Portable Matthew Arnold*, ed. Lionel Trilling (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980), pp. 271-98.

Representing the values established by the universities,¹²² Arnold opposes the 'provincial' spirit's excessive preoccupation with 'the blood and the senses', and the 'modern spirit' of the city's 'spiritual and intellectual effect', and although he tries to present the cultural idea as dynamic, it seems, in the end, a superficial status symbol.¹²³ This is the line Hardy takes. Both, moreover, use the same polarizing linguistic framework: Arnold juxtaposes high and low, spirit and blood, intellect and senses, culture and province just as Hardy's register counters 'flesh and spirit', gross and noble, coarse and fine. Jude aims 'high' in seeking admission into the colleges, the cultural 'soul', rather than working among the 'low' body of the populace which maintains the buildings' 'carcasses', but he is forever thwarted by his fleshly desires.¹²⁴

By incarnating these antitheses in Arabella and Sue and synthesizing them in Jude, Hardy dramatizes 'a deadly war';¹²⁵ inverting the decomposition of Tess into Alec and Angel,¹²⁶ Arabella and Sue function as Jude's fragmented *alter ego*.¹²⁷ But the

¹²² See Timothy Hands, 'Jude in Oxford', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XI:3 Oct 1995), 61-5, which explains why *JO* is set in Oxford and not Cambridge. Extracts from Newman's *Apologia* (1845) portray Oxford as a symbol of fidelity and enduring values, and Arnold's prose and poetry identifies the place as the home of the real scholar regardless of his social position. Hardy refers to Newman's and Arnold's impressions of Oxford several times in *JO*, but only to subvert them (see especially 2.I where Hardy's barb at Arnold is particularly pronounced: 'One of the spectres (who afterwards mourned Christminster as "the home of lost causes", though Jude did not remember this) was now apostrophizing her thus: "Beautiful city!..."'). And just as Christminster reflects his ideal desires, so his subjective is a sanctuary for such 'lost causes' and abandoned dreams. See also Julie Henigan, 'Hardy's Emblem of Futility: The Role of Christminster in *Jude the Obscure*', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 14 (1987), 12-14.

¹²³ Hardy made his views on this matter quite clear, defending the rural case: 'Arnold is wrong about provincialism, if he means anything more than a provincialism of style and manner in exposition. A certain provincialism of feeling is invaluable. It is the essence of individuality' (*EL*, p. 189; Nov 1880). See Michael Timko, 'Edinburgh, Oxford, Christminster: Self and Society in Victorian England', *Victorians Institute Journal*, 19 (1991), 25-40; Timothy Hands, 'Jude in Oxford', suggests that *JO* 'is a parody novel...which seeks to jib at a received tradition' (p. 64).

¹²⁴ F.H. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co.; New York: Macmillan, 1893), may have caught Hardy's attention while he was in the process of writing *JO*, and the chapter discussing 'Body and Soul' casts some light on current metaphysical speculation, and offers an alternative gloss for Arabella ('Body') and Sue ('Soul'): 'Body and soul have been set up as independent realities. They have been taken to be things, whose kinds are different, and which have existence each by itself, and each in its own right. And then, of course, their connection becomes incomprehensible' (Ch. XXIII, pp. 295-358 (p. 296)). In *JO*, their 'connection' is Jude in whom they could be said to be "Whole".

¹²⁵ Another indication that Wordsworth is obsolete. In the 'Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*' (1805), it is felt that 'the Reader will find that personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes; and are utterly rejected, as an ordinary device to elevate the style, and raise it above Prose' (p. 65).

¹²⁶ Contemporaries noticed the gender role reversal. In *TD*, a woman is ruined by two men (see Richard le Gallienne, *The Star* (Dec 23, 1891); rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 167-69; Andrew Lang, *New Review*, VI (Feb 1892), 247-9; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 187-8); in *JO*, a man is ruined by two women, though it was D.H. Lawrence who was the first to state explicitly in the 'Study' that 'Jude is only Tess turned roundabout' ('Study of Thomas Hardy', in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. E.D. McDonald, 2 vols (New York: Viking, 1936; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1961), I, 398-516 (p. 488)). In the 1895 edition of *TD*, after *JO* had been published, Hardy inserted a phrase which is indicative of his intentions and understanding of this reversed dilemma. It had not appeared in any previous version: 'Why so often the coarse appropriates the finer thus, the wrong man the woman, the wrong woman the man, many thousands of years of analytical philosophy have failed to explain to our sense of order' (*TD*, XI, emphasis added). For a full discussion, see Peter J. Casagrande, "'Something More to be Said": Hardy's Creative Process and the Case of *Tess* and *Jude*', in *New Perspectives on Thomas Hardy*, ed. Charles P.C. Pettit (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 16-40, esp. pp. 23-37. Casagrande, *Unity in Hardy's Novels: 'Repetitive Symmetries'* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982), regards *TD* and *JO* as 'sibling novels', and maintains that 'in *Jude* [Hardy] in a sense rewrote *Tess*...*Jude* proceeds out of *Tess* by imitating its structure which rejecting its tragic and heroic consolations' (pp. 199-200). See also So Young Lee, 'An Essay on Tess's Androgynous Vision: Hardy's Ying-Yang Principle in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *Journal of English Literature and Language*, 35:4 (Winter 1989), 651-69; Ronald D. Morrison, 'Jude the Obscure and *The Well-Beloved*: Sibling Novels', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 22 (Winter 1996), 34-53, feels that 'both novels are ironic rewritings of *Tess*' (p. 34).

¹²⁷ The general view extracted from others is that Sue and Jude's 'complete mutual understanding...madethem almost the two parts of a single whole' (*JO*, 5.V). When she dons Jude's clothes (she ignores sartorial conventions, regarding vestments as 'sexless cloth and linen'), he perceives her 'as 'a slim and fragile being masquerading as himself' (*JO*, 3.III). Even Phillotson remarks that "they seem to be one

mirror-impression is most deconstructive when its constructive possibilities are faced, when Jude sees in Arabella the potential of wholeness: 'He had just inhaled a single breath from a new atmosphere, which...had somehow been divided from his actual breathing as by a sheet of glass' (*JO*, 1.VI). This divisive 'sheet' represents the transformation wrought by the promise of erotic love, but in crossing the membrane Jude alienates himself further from the students who 'did not even see him, or hear him, rather saw through him as through a pane of glass at their familiars beyond' (*JO*, 2.II). Visually, and thus existentially negated, Jude evaporates, but Hardy seizes the potential of such oblivion, his sartorial assumption of the medium as a defence mechanism providing 'an invisible coat' which lets him 'see through' patronizers 'as though they were glass' (*LY*, p. 179; Nov 1917).¹²⁸

By this stage in the Hardy canon, character-splitting is a latent doubling¹²⁹ whereby two figures illustrate a unified conflict in the author's mind: either the concept is divided into two characters (Sue and Arabella), or the attitude toward the image is divided (the disparate responses to both women). Either way, the problem is irreconcilable, and in *Jude the Obscure* this says a lot about Hardy's conception and treatment of females:

All his heroines are ideals, or at least idealized types, rather than portraits drawn from real life. To this extent, therefore, Mr Hardy is not 'realistic' in the vulgar sense of the word. He has shrunk from the portrayal of commonplace women - if we except the case of Arabella.¹³⁰

Existing principally as intellectual and sensual precipitates, Sue and Arabella are further violated by male scrutiny. Unlike the narrator, Jude averts his physical eye from Sue, but

person split in two!" (*JO*, 4.IV). The perfect union of this 'two-in-oneness' (*JO*, 6.II) manifests itself in mirrored words, actions and intentions. Perhaps there is the possibility that their love is narcissistically based. Bradley argues that 'the soul and body may be regarded as two sides of one reality, or as the same thing taken twice and from two aspects of its being' ('Body and Soul', in *Appearance and Reality*, p. 323); in this case, Jude.

¹²⁸ See G.P. Lainsbury, "'Outside the Gates of Everything": The Problem of Tragic sensibility in *Jude the Obscure*', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 23 (Winter 1996), 5-17: 'In tragedy the hero or heroine is always differentiated from his or her community by some sort of attribute or physical marking. Oedipus has his maimed foot and Agamemnon his self-blinding pride. In the case of Jude and Sue, their ability to "see through" this world is also their tragic flaw, for in seeing through it they render themselves unable to see "into" it with sufficient clarity to recognize that their sense of *hubris*, the quality that sets them apart, may also be the quality that leads to their downfall' (p. 14).

¹²⁹ See the relevant section, and n. 87, in the chapter on *MC*. The doubling method as it is used in *TD* and *JO* is fundamentally different from that employed in *MC*. In the earlier work, Henchard experiences the split internally, psychologically: the only external indication of the process is the masculine effigy/carapace of clothes; he does not decompose into Susan and Lucetta (any more than Eustacia, for instance, crumbles into Clym and Wildeve), and 'duality' is not a central preoccupation of the novel. In *TD* and *JO*, however, Tess and Jude exist as children somehow set apart before we see the traumatic events which precipitate their adult state/alter egos, and the war between flesh (objective/public) and spirit (subjective/private) structures both narratives.

¹³⁰ D. F. Hannigan, *Westminster Review*, CXLV (Jan 1896), 136-9; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 260-3 (I, 260).

upon Arabella both fix a full, admiring gaze: 'She had a round and prominent bosom, full lips, perfect teeth...She was a complete and substantial female animal - no more, no less' (*JO*, 1.VI), an emphatic underlining of the unrefined in Arabella's physical attraction given the manuscript, serial and first edition description of her as a 'substantial female human'.¹³¹ No wonder, then, exposed to her instinctive 'artificiality' and 'counterfeiting' in the guise of dimples and hair-pieces, that Jude 'seemed to see the world with a different eye' (*JO*, 1.IX).

Though Jude recognizes the 'signs', Arabella's more overt actions are unreadable; though Jude constructs her as anti-text, she is nevertheless a variety on the 'humaner letters' (*JO*, 1.VI) which displace the academic alternatives.¹³² When her feminine/ body language seduces Jude away from the masculine/textual equivalent, it is taken as a visual betrayal, and, returning from his first escapade, he is rebuked by the neglected book: 'the capital letters on the title-page [regarded] him with a fixed reproach...like the unclosed eyes of a dead man' (*JO*, 1.VII). Nothing surpasses 'the curse in a dead man's eye!'¹³³ and as 'vacant' and 'viewless' mirrors, the sightless optics reflect his guilt, but the ghastly resurrection of this male tome is pushed into insignificance by Arabella's living variation. In addition, Jude's "readings" of this disruptive other are more impressive: his study of her footprints inscribes the pages of his memory, and 'the embroidery of imagination upon the stuff of nature' (ib.) brings her before him.¹³⁴

Yet Arabella does not deserve unconditional blame for Jude's failure; she wreaks less havoc than the novel's rhetoric would have us believe,¹³⁵ and for Bayley she is the 'false causal link' which 'vitiates the novel'.¹³⁶ Sue is by far more dangerous. Whereas Arabella is nothing other than she appears (and is, after all, openly deceptive), Sue is a visual cipher, a 'riddle' (*JO*, 3.I, 4.IV), a 'colossal inconsistency' (*JO*, 3.VII) with

¹³¹ Such a revision makes a revolutionary mark for 'substantial' feminine sexuality, yet Hardy, though he makes room for this topic in the novel, cannot decide whether to accept Arabella (his pig references imply a disgust for female sexuality), and he presents her more negatively than he could have done.

¹³² For a general discussion of the feminine corporeal text, see Helena Mitchie, *The Flesh Made Word: Female Figures in Women's Bodies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

¹³³ Coleridge, 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' (1797-1816), Part IV, line 260.

¹³⁴ As Morrison, 'Jude the Obscure and The Well-Beloved: Sibling Novels', observes, 'typical of so many of Hardy's male lovers. Jude writes his own version of Arabella in his book of memory, writing over her flesh-and-blood edition' (p. 38). Thus he falls in love with his vision of Arabella, as he does with Sue, and is enamoured of an absence rather than a woman. Moreover, the assimilation of dead eye and imagination to produce a dead imagination is Hardy's way of taking 'a full look at the Worst' ('In Tenebris II', *CP*, 137).

¹³⁵ See Frederick P.W. McDowall, 'In Defence of Arabella: A Note on *Jude the Obscure*', *English Language Notes*, 1 (1964), 274-870.

¹³⁶ John Bayley, *An Essay on Hardy*, p. 214.

'untranslatable eyes' (*JO*, 2.II).¹³⁷ She is consistently though 'ridiculously inconsistent' (*JO*, 4.II), 'puzzling and unpredictable' (*JO*, 4.III), 'ever evasive' (*JO*, 5.V),¹³⁸ and Hardy never once places, analyses or exposes her. Indeed, Hardy's own mounting interest in Sue as she took on 'shape & reality', as he wrote to Florence Henniker in 1894, seems in part due to her remaining 'very nebulous at present' (*CL*, II, 47). Seen through a conflicting range of viewings, she simply is. 'Sue's conduct was one lovely conundrum to him; he could say no more' (*JO*, 3.II). Neither can Hardy.

Such an uncontrollable discourse is a threatening element¹³⁹ in this male-centred novel, especially when its source has 'no fear of men, as such, nor of their books' (*JO*, 3.IV). Masculine texts are at least decipherable and univocal when a 'key' is applied, but the idiolect of the New Woman,¹⁴⁰ based on dualisms that are spoken rather than written, is indecipherable and equivocal. The sheer 'elusiveness of [Sue's] curious double nature' (*JO*, 4.II) reinforces the novel's 'glaringly inconsistent' (*JO*, 4.IV) visual pattern, and critical exegeses are radically confounded: her contradictoriness stimulates the gaze of her explicators, but resists determination and leaves something that refuses containment. For Ingham, those who accept the challenge and

¹³⁷ And Sue's 'Soul' to Arabella's 'Body' 'is, on its side also, a purely phenomenal existence, an appearance incomplete and inconsistent' (Bradley, 'Body and Soul', in *Appearance and Reality*, p. 298).

¹³⁸ Elizabeth Langland, 'A Perspective of One's Own': Thomas Hardy and the Elusive Sue Bridehead', *Studies in the Novel*, 12 (1980), 12-28, argues that though Hardy revised the novel to make Sue more sympathetic to readers, the author's conception of her remains 'inconsistent and flawed' largely because of his inability to integrate her successfully into the plot (p. 25).

¹³⁹ The novel's 1912 Preface draws attention to this incursive element, Sue constituting 'the first delineation in fiction of the woman who was coming into notice in her thousands every year - the woman of the feminist movement - the slight, pale, "bachelor" girl - the intellectualized, emancipated bundle of nerves that modern conditions were producing'. This is the 'New Woman' of the late nineteenth century. Walter Allen's *The Woman Who Did* appeared in the same year as *JO*, Herminia Barton being sister to Sue. Hardy, in an effort to distinguish *JO* from the 'novels of ideas' genre, called them 'purpose novels' (*CL*, II, 92), yet *JO* clearly has such a thread running through it. See Robert B. Heilman, 'Hardy's Sue Bridehead', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 20 (1965-6); Mary Jacobus, 'Sue the Obscure', *Essays in Criticism*, 25 (1975), 304-28; Lloyd Fernando, 'Hardy: "The Fiction of Sex and the New Woman"', in *New Women in the Late Victorian Novel* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1977), pp. 129-46; Kathleen Blake, 'Sue Bridehead: "The Woman of the Feminist Movement"', *Studies in English Literature*, 18 (1978), 703-26; Janet B. Wright, 'Hardy and his Contemporaries: The Literary Context of *Jude the Obscure*', *Inscape*, 14 (1980), 135-50, describes Hardy's familiarity with novels about the New Woman in the early 1890s. Gail Cunningham, 'Thomas Hardy: New Women for Old', in *The New Woman and the Victorian Novel* (London: Macmillan; New York: Harper & Row, 1978), pp. 80-118; John Goode, 'Sue Bridehead and the New Woman', in *Women Writing and Writing About Women*, ed. Mary Jacobus (New York: Barnes & Noble; London: Helen Croome, 1979), pp. 100-13, asserts that 'it is the incomprehensibility that constitutes the novel's effect' (p. 108). See also Patricia Stubbs, *Women and Fiction: Feminism and the Novel 1880-1920* (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press; New York: Harper & Row, 1979; rpt. London: Methuen, 1981); Penny Boumelha, *Thomas Hardy and Women: Sexual Ideology and Narrative Form* (Brighton: Harvester Press; Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Nobles, 1982); Merryn Williams, 'Hardy and "the Woman Question"', *Thomas Hardy Annual: No. 1*, ed. Norman Page (London: Macmillan, 1982), 44-59; Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985); Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (London: Methuen, 1985); Anne B. Simpson, 'Sue Bridehead Revisited', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 19 (1991), 55-66; Cedric Watts, 'Hardy's Sue Bridehead and the "New Woman"', *Critical Survey*, 5:2 (1993), 152-56; Michael Thorpe, 'Sue the Obscure: Hardy's Female Readers', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XI:3 (Oct 1995), 66-78; S. Diamond, 'Mothers in the Margin: Thomas Hardy, D.H. Lawrence, and Suffragism's Discontents', *Colby Quarterly*, 32:2 (1996), 100-12.

¹⁴⁰ The phrase 'New Woman' was supposedly coined by Sarah Grand in 1894 in the *North American Review* to describe a new generation of women who, influenced by J.S. Mill (whom Sue frequently cites in her discussions with Jude), believed in the abolition of the sexual double standard (for which Sue argues) and for equal educational opportunities.

chart in detail her inconsistency, do[ing] so in order to solve the conundrum, resolve the contradictions only by blanket statements ...a mathematical equation is sought, a formula that will equal the sum of her inconsistencies.¹⁴¹

Formulaic approaches fail to 'contribute to a coherent creation of the "subject" Sue' even in this geometrical novel for 'there always remains a surplus. Each one represents one more grid over intractable material.'¹⁴²

Sue is 'puzzling and unstateable' (*JO*, 4.II), or 'puzzling and unpredictable' as the first edition reads. The alteration is significant.¹⁴³ Though the original is successful in defining her, it hardly approaches the problems facing the novelist for language, by its nature, comes close to 'explaining the inexplicable',¹⁴⁴ and, in this case, stating the 'unstateable'. But Hardy 'deliberately avoids giving the impression that [Sue] is a finite being whose personality can be wholly explained or encapsulated in words'¹⁴⁵ by stressing her 'unconscious contradictions' (*JO*, 4.II). Still, this strategy is challenged by the narrator and qualified, but not cancelled, by those passages toward the end in which Sue and Jude try to interpret and summarize themselves. For Hardy's later protagonists, efforts to integrate perceptual/experiential fragments into a self-mastering authenticity are no longer viable:

Characters attempt to narrate themselves into coherence and fail because the narrative constituents of their egos are not prone to cohere given the failure of those principles which could guide them to wholeness. Moreover, the terms by which they seek a unified point of view are themselves involved in too many cultural debates to be able to supply the desired rhetorical effect of organic growth.¹⁴⁶

Yet whether Sue ever seeks a 'unified point of view' of herself is questionable; in every debate with Jude she argues herself into *in*coherence; she purpose(ful)ly obscures herself by validating then subverting masculine evaluations:

¹⁴¹ Patricia Ingham, 'Provisional Narratives: Hardy's Final Trilogy', in *Alternative Hardy*, ed. Lance St John Butler (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 49-73 (p. 51).

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 56-7, 51.

¹⁴³ Aside from its revelation of Hardy's motives, it is reworked and matured by Lawrence in the description of Birkin in a distinctly sexual context: 'the living silence seemed the body of reality in him, subtle, potent, undiscoverable... This dark, subtle reality of him, never to be translated' is 'awful in its potency, mystic and real' (*Women in Love* (1921), Ch. XXIII).

¹⁴⁴ Rosemary Sumner, "'The Adventure to the Unknown": Hardy, Lawrence and Developments in the Novel', in *A Spacious Vision: Essays on Hardy*, ed. P.V. Mallett and R.P. Draper (Newmill: Patten Press, 1994), pp. 66-78 (pp. 73-4).

¹⁴⁵ Sumner, *Thomas Hardy: Psychological Novelist*, p. 183.

¹⁴⁶ Kevin Z. Moore, *The Descent of the Imagination: Postromantic Culture in the Later Novels of Thomas Hardy* (London and New York: University of New York Press, 1990), p. 8.

'How modern you are!'

'So would you be if you had lived so much in the Middle Ages as I have done these last few years!...I am not modern, either. I am more ancient than mediaevalism.' (*JO*, 3.I)

"Your point of view" (ib.) of me is incorrect, she continues. "You called me a creature of civilization...It is provokingly wrong. I am a sort of negation of it" (*JO*, 3.IV). Such an evasive and neutralizing pattern of anti-definition is a deliberate contrivance dedicated to a specific purpose: to baffle, to disconcert. And this is characteristic of Bradley's 'Soul':

to keep your soul, you must remain fixed in a posture of inconsistency. For, like every other 'thing' in time, the soul is essentially ideal...It is a series which depends on ideal transcendence, and yet desires to be taken as a sensible fact. And its inconsistency is now made manifest in its use of its contents.¹⁴⁷

And so often is Sue's 'posture of inconsistency' mentioned that, in the end, it cancels itself and compromises any significance or meaning. The only absolute about Sue is her 'negation' of every perspective imposed upon her which seeks to stabilize her (the soul 'persists only by refusing to see more in itself than subserves its own existence'¹⁴⁸), her inherent intractability¹⁴⁹ stemming from her central 'negation' of Arnold's 'blood and senses'. Her nature does not 'rhyme' and her 'lack of balance between intellect and emotions'¹⁵⁰ offsets the stable harmony that Arabella maintains between common-sense practicality and sensual indulgence. As a mass of latent conflicts, Sue is restricted to an ambivalent dual function when her unorthodox and enigmatic sides converge: both desired and feared by others, she excites in them the simultaneous need to possess and distance her, to experience her as both an 'ideal transcendence' and a 'sensible fact'.¹⁵¹

Bradley's hypothesis that 'in order for the soul to exist, "experience" must be mutilated. It must be *regarded*...; it must be *considered*...And, looked at by itself, the soul is an abstraction',¹⁵² repeats Hardy's own. To exist, Sue is 'exhibited'¹⁵³ as a visual

¹⁴⁷ Bradley, 'Body and Soul', in *Appearance and Reality*, p. 303.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 304. Hence Sue's appeal to Jude to deny that she is 'more' than human by "'say[ing] those pretty lines, then, from Shelley's "Epipsychidion" as if they meant me!" (*JO*, 4.V).

¹⁴⁹ i.e., her refusal to be governed, defined or managed by a masculine 'point of view'. She is thus different from Tess who, though stubborn, does not deliberately go out to 'negate' and obscure men's perceptions of her. There is no need: Tess knows who she is, but it is unlikely that Sue does.

¹⁵⁰ Sumner, *Thomas Hardy: Psychological Novelist*, p. 186.

¹⁵¹ Bradley, 'Body and Soul', in *Appearance and Reality*, p. 303.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 304; Bradley's emphasis.

puzzle inviting resolution,¹⁵⁴ and as 'a kind of locus for the contradictions'¹⁵⁵ of the novel, she manipulates others into trying to contain these incongruities. Even the narrative eye, authorially directed, "frames" her in windows, pictures and doors in a (futile) effort at controlled exposition.¹⁵⁶ Hardy submits Bathsheba, pictorially framed by Oak at the outset, to the same treatment, and her portrait is named, explained; Sue never grants this definitive luxury and thus undermines the ironic self-assurance assumed by her perceivers. And because Jude's first glimpse of his cousin through a window etherealizes her and initiates the familiar series of visual appropriations - she 'belong[s] to him', has 'his own voice', and is, ultimately, 'his own' (ib.)¹⁵⁷ - she escapes visualization because he hold her up as his looking-glass. We see him, not her.

Jude is like the youth in the Preface to Shelley's 'Alastor' (1815) who 'drinks deep of the fountains of knowledge, and is still insatiate', whose mind yearns for 'intercourse with an intelligence similar to itself', and who 'images to himself the Being whom he loves'. In effect, Sue, satisfying his narcissism, becomes 'the vision in which he embodies his own imaginations',¹⁵⁸ and only when Jude leaves the locality and Sue ventures outside Christminster does she exist in her own right, but Hardy is quick to follow her, as Morgan notices.¹⁵⁹ No longer artfully framed in the city, she is naturally freed in the countryside; no longer disembodied, she has the physical attractiveness of a 'pretty, liquid-eyed, light-footed young woman' (*JO*, 2.III) who gets plaster on her gloves and jacket. Most importantly, rather than the subject of voyeurism, she is its practitioner, 'peeping inside the leaves' at the 'naked' images (ib.). This brief alternation of perspectives shows that Jude is not Hardy. Whereas Hardy is attracted by the smallest

¹⁵³ Bayley, *An Essay on Hardy*, p. 211.

¹⁵⁴ See James R. Kincaid, 'Girl-watching, Child-beating, and Other Exercises for Readers of *Jude the Obscure*', in *The Sense of Sex: Feminist Perspectives on Hardy*, ed. Margaret Higonnet (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 132-48 (p.145). Penny Boumelha, *Thomas Hardy and Women: Sexual ideology and Narrative Form* (Brighton: Harvester Press; Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Nobles, 1982), p. 147, also notices this visual tendency.

¹⁵⁵ Martin Wilson, "Lovely Conundrum" and Locus for Conflict: The Figure of Sue Bridehead in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XI:3 (Oct 1995), 90-100 (p. 91).

¹⁵⁶ Another form of control seems to be violence, both verbal and physical. For a catalogue of direct, indirect and hypothesized forms, see Martin Wilson, above, p. 91.

¹⁵⁷ Yet it is Sue rather than Jude who comes closest to dominating the novel. Ingham, 'Provisional Narratives', remarks, however, that 'the final title of the volume edition... attempts to deflect attention toward the male protagonist' (p. 50). But Sue plays both male and female parts: she even puts on his costume, behaves like a man (she drinks and socializes as if she were one of them; as a child, one of her 'accomplishments' is doing 'things that only boys do, as a rule' (*JO*, 2.VI)), and assumes the independence traditionally monopolized by the man in sexual, educational and financial terms. See Ellen Lew Sprechman, *Seeing Women as Men: Role Reversal in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Lanham and London: University Press of America, 1995).

¹⁵⁸ Moore, *The Descent of the Imagination*, argues that *JO* is predicated upon 'Alastor'.

¹⁵⁹ Rosemarie Morgan, *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1988), p. 143.

prosaic details, pipe-clay on clothes, Jude is enchanted by her remoteness, as with the mirage of Christminster; independently of Hardy, Jude confirms Sue's spiritualization by seeing her as 'not a woman...hardly flesh at all' (*JO*, 6.III, 4.V) and is terrified lest material reality destructively strike a discordant note. His youthful wish has been granted: he has not grown up.

'A child is completely deceived; the older members of society more or less according to their penetration; though even they seldom get to realize that *nothing* is as it appears' (*EL*, p. 231; Dec 1885). Sue yearns 'to get back to the life of [her] infancy' (*JO*, 3.II); Jude at nineteen is still 'as simple as a child' (*JO*, 1.VI); Arabella deprecates the pair as 'silly fools - like two children' (*JO*, 5.V). Though for a time they recapture a moment of 'Greek joyousness, and have blinded [them]selves to sickness and sorrow' (*JO*, 5.V)¹⁶⁰ at the flower garden, 'always there is a black spot in our sunshine: it is even, as I said, the *Shadow of Ourselves*'.¹⁶¹ Carlylean truth thus casts over the sun "'one immediate shadow, however, - only one." And she looked at the aged child' (ib.).¹⁶² The ultimate child-vision is not a 'healthy' illusion, 'the mark of an imperishable brightness of nature' (*DR*, 2.I). Now, nearing the end of that 'long line of disillusioning centuries' (*RN*, 3.I), the 'nodal point' and perceptual focus is Little Father Time,¹⁶³ 'a small, pale child' with 'large, frightened eyes' (*JO*, 5.II). Part of the novel's imaginative universe consists of a child-like fantasy realm which approaches nightmarish (dis)proportions,¹⁶⁴ and Little Father Time, 'with his warped view of life, contributes ...to the grim fantasy in the novel. Existence seen through the eyes of this precocious and humourless boy becomes a sinister and sick horror'.¹⁶⁵ A living paradox, a visible irony contradicting 'Nature's logic', Father Time is an allegorical figure, 'Age masquerading as Juvenility' (*JO*, 5.II).

¹⁶⁰ After all, 'What mortal could be sick or sorry here?' (Arnold, 'Empedocles on Etna' (1852), I i. 20).

¹⁶¹ Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, II.IX. Cp. Carlyle's rhetorical question, 'How could your Wanderer escape from - his own Shadow?' Teufelsdröckh, like Jude, is 'once for all, a Son of Time', as is Little father Time (II.VI).

¹⁶² *TD* is the last novel (preceded by *RN* and *W*) in which this state is permitted a longer and more successful hearing. By the time of *JO*, the modern 'shadow' is too overwhelming.

¹⁶³ Perhaps the forerunner of Marcel Proust's 'Infant Time' (*Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C.K. Scott-Moncrieff, et al., 3 vols (New York: Random House; London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), III, 1080).

¹⁶⁴ See Emma Clifford, 'The Child: The Circus: and *Jude the Obscure*', *Cambridge Journal*, VIII (Jan 1954), 531-46. Little Father Time realizes the horrific visions of reality only imagined by Johnny Nunsuch and Abraham Ourbeyfield, though none of Hardy's children is 'happy' in the conventional sense anyway.

¹⁶⁵ Frederick P.W. McDowell, 'The Symbolical use of Image and Contrast in *Jude the Obscure*', *Modern Fiction Studies*, IV:3 (Autumn 1960), 233-50; rpt. *TH:CA*, IV, 186-201 (IV, 196).

Jude believes that future generations' heightened perception will see "'Shapes like our own selves hideously multiplied", and will be afraid to reproduce them' (*JO*, 5.IV). The present age has already reproduced its spirit in Father Time, a hideously magnified shadow of Jude who, at eleven, is 'an ancient man in some phases of thought, much younger than his years in others' (*JO*, 1.IV).¹⁶⁶ For Jude and Sue, he is 'their expression in a single term' (*JO*, 6.II), an emblem of personal historical process: 'on that little shape had converged all the inauspiciousness and shadow which had darkened the first union of Jude and all the accidents, mistakes, fears, errors of the last' (ib.).¹⁶⁷ Paradoxically, though a figurative excess, he is not out of place in a time witnessing a growing influx of

'such boys, boys of a sort unknown in the last generation - the outcome of new views of life. They seem to see all its terrors before they are old enough to have staying power to resist them...[I]t is the beginning of the coming universal wish not to live.' (*JO*, 6.II)

Symbolic of Thanatos rather than Eros, of Schopenhauer's 'hope of cosmic suicide' rather than Hegel's 'spiritual society',¹⁶⁸ Father Time's successful emptying the world of its images and meaning neutralizes Jude's useless efforts to fill the void. Modern terror obliterates ancient joyousness and consigns humanity to the Spencerian abyss of 'universal death' in reparation for an evolutionary oversight, and even Jude's face 'wearing the fixity of a thoughtful child who has felt the pricks of life somewhat before his time' (*JO*, 1.I) is as nothing alongside the abyss mirrored in his son's. Father Time's countenance reflects a terrified, prevenient recognition of the Unknown which may trace Hardy's understanding of De Quincey's 'Affliction of Childhood':

About the close of my sixth year, suddenly the first chapter of my life came

¹⁶⁶ See Julie A. Karsten, 'Jude Fawley and Little Father Time: Hardy's "New Men"', *Publications of the Mississippi Philological Association* (1985), 91-7; Suzanne Edwards, 'A Shadow from the Past: Little Father Time in *Jude the Obscure*', *Colby Library Quarterly*, 23:1 (March 1987), 32-8.

¹⁶⁷ He is, much like Sorrow, a symbol. Hardy uses children as "messengers". The sons of Swithen and Viviette, and Jude and Arabella seem to be 'spokesmen for Hardy's view that life is a sore trial' (John H. Schwarz, 'Hardy's Children', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 23 (Winter 1996), 21-8 (p. 26)).

¹⁶⁸ In 1893 Hardy noted that 'in philosophy Schopenhauer has given place to Hegel - the hope of cosmic suicide to the thought of a spiritual society...Pessimism has had its day' (*LN*, II, 1908; Sidney Alexander, 'Pessimism and Progress', *Contemporary Review*, LXVIII (Jan 1893), 83), and then parenthetically qualifies this with '[comforting but false]'. See Eleanor C. Guetzloe and Ralph M. Cline, 'Jude the Obscure: A Pathway to Suicide', in *Youth Suicide Prevention: Lessons from Literature*, ed. Sara Munson Deats (New York: Plenum, 1989), pp. 115-34; Mary Ann Kelly, 'Schopenhauer's Influence on Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*', in *Schopenhauer: New Essays in Honour of His 200th Birthday*, ed. Eric von der Luft (Lewiston, New York: Mellen, 1988), pp. 232-46; William J. Scheick, 'Schopenhauerian Compassion, Fictional Structure, and the Reader: The Example of Hardy and Conrad', in *Twilight of Dawn: Studies in English Literature in Transition*, ed. O.M. Brack (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1987), pp. 45-67.

to a violent termination...*Life is finished!* was the secret misgiving of my heart...*Life is finished! Finished it is!* was the bidden meaning that half-unconsciously to myself, lurked within my sights.¹⁶⁹

Similar sentiments are reiterated in *Suspiria de Profundis* (1845):

Upon me, as upon others scattered thin by tens and twenties over every thousand years, fell too powerfully and too early the vision of life. The horror of life mixed itself already in earliest youth with the heavenly sweetness of life.¹⁷⁰

Prematurely wise, Hardy's 'too-reflective child' (*JO*, 6.I) recalls Dickens's Paul Dombey who at five has a 'strange, old-fashioned, thoughtful way', who looks and talks 'like one of those terrible Beings in Fairy tales, who, at a hundred and fifty or two hundred years of age, fantastically represent the children for whom they have been substituted'.¹⁷¹ But whereas Paul is consoled by faith in a beneficent Being, Father Time, 'doubly awake' to the horror of a vacuous universe, touches the fringes of the novel's Unknowable origins. In 1885 Hardy cited the following:

Metaphysic. We begin with the particular, not the universal...*Ideal & Phenomenal.* The processes of science...involve a negation of the particular as it is immediately presented to sense, but only with a view to its being reaffirmed with a new determination through the universal. (*LN*, I, 1372)¹⁷²

Little Father Time's epistemology reverses such precepts: 'Children...begin with the contiguous, and gradually comprehend the universal. The boy seemed to have begun with the generals of life, and never to have concerned himself with the particulars' (*JO*, 5.II), his scientific practices including the 'whole' and excluding the 'immediate' in a truly 'spacious vision' (*CP*, 465).¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ Thomas De Quincey, 'The Affliction of Childhood', in *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*, ed. David Masson, 14 vols (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1889-90; London: Adam and Charles Black, 1897), XIV, 1.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, XIII, 350.

¹⁷¹ Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son* (1846; London and Glasgow: Collins, 1954), p. 107.

¹⁷² 'Metaphysics', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 9th edn. (Edinburgh, 1885), XVI, 79-97.

¹⁷³ 'Midnight on the Great Western' (*CP*, 465) is the poetical version of this journey. The transcendent vision and contemplation of the Platonic theory of pre-existence are cruelly reduced through prosaic expression. The 'journeying boy' in 'the third-class seat' is rhetorically interrogated as to his possessing a soul conscious of 'a sphere' above and beyond 'our rude realm'. His 'spacious vision' leaves him ignorant of his beginning or end; the 'journey' is from the 'past' into the 'unknown'. 'A string / Around his neck bore the key of his box', the image being a blatant and grotesque premonition of his suicide: he carries both the instrument of his death, and his coffin, with him. In *JO*, Father Time is situated similarly in 'the gloom of a third-class carriage' and has 'a key suspended round his neck by a piece of common string' for his box. It is a crude piece of proleptic symbolism, and his state of 'true perception' approximates his poetical counterpart's 'spacious vision'.

A ground swell from ancient years of night seemed now and then to lift the child in this his morning-life, when his face took a back view over some great Atlantic of Time...To him the houses, the willows, the obscure fields beyond, were apparently regarded not as brick residences, pollards, meadows; but as human dwellings in the abstract, vegetation, and the wide dark world. (*JO*, 5.III)¹⁷⁴

Father Time's perceptual and contemplative extravagance is fatally efficient, his 'preternaturally old' sensibilities heralding the collapse of all idealizing visions. His actions, that 'mechanical creep which had in it an impersonal quality - the movement of the wave, or of the breeze, or of the cloud' (*ib.*), defamiliarize and desubliminate all aesthetic and metaphysical correspondences;¹⁷⁵ his existence depersonifies traditional intimations of immortality; and his 'habit of sitting silent, his...eyes resting on things that they did not see in the substantial world' (*JO*, 5.IV),¹⁷⁶ brings Hardy's nihilistic observational thesis to a 'logical' conclusion.

This distillation of the novel's climate into one small boy is an ingenious, extreme anti-realistic technique which problematizes the matter of its success.¹⁷⁷ To Robinson, it is because Father Time is such an overt embodiment of evolutionary pessimism

that he fails so badly as a fictional creation. For once, Hardy has imposed a schematized idea on a character, instead of following the method which gives such integrity and richness to almost all his fiction - allowing the ideas to emerge as 'fugitive impressions'.¹⁷⁸

In addition, says Robinson, Father Time's symbolic role is unconvincing because of Jude's unassailable dominance; so thorough is his upstaging that he consigns everything else to his 'shadow' and abrogates the metaphorical success of his son. The child is

¹⁷⁴ Cp. Wordsworth's 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality' (1802), where he addresses a child, 'a six years' Darling of a pigmy size' (lines 110-20) as a prophet, and Coleridge's apostrophe regarding Wordsworth's 'defects' in these lines from the essay on Wordsworth in Ch. XXII of *Biographia Literaria* (1817), ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, vol VII of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn, 16 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), VII (ii), pp. 119-59 (p. 138). The case of Father Time is similarly intriguing, as with the child in the connected poem. Norman Holland, 'Jude the Obscure: Hardy's Symbolic Indictment of Christianity', *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, 9 (1954), 50-60, regards the child as an ineffable symbol, and compares him to Christ (p. 53) (he is like a 'dwarfed Divinity' (*JO*, 5.III)) and his explanatory note to biblical passages. See also Eleanor McNeess, 'Reverse Typology in *Jude the Obscure*', *Christianity and Literature*, 39:1 (Autumn 1989), 35-49; Richard Nemesvari, 'Appropriating the Word: *Jude the Obscure* as Subversive Apocrypha', *Victorian Review*, 19:2 (Winter 1993), 48-66.

¹⁷⁵ See Patricia O'Neill, 'Thomas Hardy: Poetics of a Postromantic', *Victorian Poetry*, 27 (Summer 1989), 129-45, who considers metonymy an metaphor in the novels and poems.

¹⁷⁶ Once again, Father Time sublimates a characteristic of the youthful Sue and Jude. As Drusilla relates, "You too, Jude, had the same trick [as Sue] as a child of seeming to see things in the air" (*JO*, 2.VI).

¹⁷⁷ Widdowson, *Thomas Hardy*, refers to the novel's 'performative anti-realism' and its 'self-advertising fictionality' (p. 68).

¹⁷⁸ Roger Robinson, 'Hardy and Darwin', in *Thomas Hardy: The Writer and His Background*, ed. Norman Page (London: Bell & Hyman, 1980), pp. 128-150 (p. 135). See my 'Harmonious Inconsistency: The Formal Necessity of the Aged Child in *Jude the Obscure*', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 26 (Dec 1997), 43-50, which argues for the success of Father Time.

overdrawn because everything for which he stands is incarnated in his father, and Schwarz suggests that we are actively encouraged to appreciate Father Time as a 'fantastic and psychological intensification of Jude's perceptions'.¹⁷⁹ Though persuasive, such views fail to justify the innovative significance that Father Time has for this novel in particular and prose fiction in general. For the first time Hardy encompasses a mature work's structure in a juvenile metaphor, and asks art to express something which it cannot as yet manage (an eventuality he addresses through the exclamatory adjuncts): neither *Jude the Obscure* nor Father Time is moulded into an obedient, definitive form; each is only half-controlled, and borders on disintegration.

Jude the Obscure introduced a fiction capable of accommodating a fragmented narrative, and it is an ironic logic that Father Time, the unpardonable flaw, the most obscene incongruity, should hold the key to this new form. He is the single awkward inclusion in a work of

subjective consciousness, of possibility and imagination, of an over-arching halo... Father Time disrupts it with the limitations of existence, being and becoming; with... the unknown and unknowable internal and external aspects of life.¹⁸⁰

Like Sue, he is puzzling and unstateable; he 'shatters the textuality of *Jude the Obscure* and the canon by the very violence of his metaphoric eruption'.¹⁸¹ But he is vital:

Father Time marks the outer most reach of Hardy's art; the extravagance is too great, the stylization fails; the formal and realistic modes collide. But there is a sense in which the very violence of that collision is a measure of the author's creative energy, of his undiminished eagerness to encompass something new.¹⁸²

Irwin's and Gregor's perceptive critique traces the 'creative energy' generated by the 'collision' of modes, but their conclusion that the excess tips the balance into failure is

¹⁷⁹ Daniel Schwarz, 'Beginnings and Endings in Hardy's Major Fiction', in *Critical Approaches to the Novels of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Dale Kramer (London: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 17-35 (p. 33). For a related topic, see René Gallet, 'Diabolus ex Machina: Ouverture et Cloture dans *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* de Thomas Hardy', in *Fins de Romans: Aspects de la Conclusion dans la Littérature Anglaise* (Caen: PU de Caen, 1993), pp. 29-41.

¹⁸⁰ Sheila Berger, *Thomas Hardy and Visual Structures: Framing, Disruption, Process* (London and New York: New York University Press, 1990), p. 177.

¹⁸¹ William E. Buckler, *The Victorian Imagination: Essays in Aesthetic Imagination* (New York: New York University Press, 1980), p. 368.

¹⁸² Michael Irwin and Ian Gregor, 'Either Side of Wessex', in *Thomas Hardy After Fifty Years*, ed. Lance St John Butler (London: Macmillan, 1977), pp. 104-115 (p. 115).

disputable if not misdirected, for the text's extreme formal and generic 'violence' is central, the conspicuousness of the symbolic/realistic antithesis intensifying the latent incongruity. Such methodology verges on destroying what it endeavours to create, and radical disruption seems inevitable, but Hardy approaches the circumvention of that contingency as both a challenge and a risk. The novel hangs together, but only just. Something new is in process here.

Up until the final section, the imaginative interaction of the symbolic and the real is generally plausible, but following the grotesque deaths of the children ('it is strange that Mr Hardy did not perceive how he had imperilled the whole fabric by a stroke which passes the border of burlesque'¹⁸³), real and fantastic are wrenched apart.¹⁸⁴ Ellis regretted how the anti-realism of the infanticide threw experience among 'things...comparatively unreal. It seems an unnecessary clash in the story',¹⁸⁵ and, along with Mrs Oliphant, saw *Jude the Obscure* as coming ominously close to farce, an appraisal which pinpoints the novel's self-enclosed destructiveness. Thus, just as Jude sees the future magically cast before the pizzle is hurled, so here, his perfunctory watching of the eggs is a tasteless prefiguration.¹⁸⁶ The narrative bursts from its boundaries and drops the reader into a void. Superficially, Hardy has dismissed his original plan to communicate a personal 'series of seemings' because all is so heavy-handed and contrived; fundamentally, this wilful distortion exaggerates the gulf between reality as objectively seen by the narrator and imaginatively conjured by Jude.

Under the aegis of current theoretic thinking, 'all that was particular and concrete became resolved by analysis into what was general and abstract',¹⁸⁷ an apposite remark given Vigar's explanation that the structural collapse occasioned by the deaths is 'the result of Hardy's inability to transfer his point of view from the particular to the

¹⁸³ Anon., *Illustrated London News*, CVIII (Jan 11, 1896), p. 50; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 264-6 (I, 265). Joanna Gibson, 'Children as Messengers in Hardy's Fiction and Poetry', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 23 (Winter 1996), 29-43, feels that Father Time's 'attempt to do the "right thing"...seems to be an grotesque reversal of an heroic gesture, possibly inspired by Sue's freeing her pet pigeons...and by being told that nature's law is mutual butchery' (p. 36).

¹⁸⁴ See Jeffrey Berman, 'Infanticide and Object Loss in *Jude the Obscure*', in *Compromise Formations: Current Directions in Psychoanalytic Criticism*, ed. Vera J. Camden (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1989), pp. 155-81.

¹⁸⁵ Havelock Ellis, 'Concerning *Jude the Obscure*', *Savoy Magazine*, VI (Oct 1896), 35-49; rpt. *TH:CA*, III, 91-103 (III, 97).

¹⁸⁶ According to Christiana Hole, *Witchcraft in England* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd, 1945), a witch boiling eggs dedicated to a specific individual becomes a magical killing (pp. 41-2).

¹⁸⁷ Lewes, 'The Course of Modern Thought', p. 318.

general'.¹⁸⁸ Pinion also argues that 'this horror is unacceptable on realistic grounds, and achieves little imaginative coherence with the rest of the novel',¹⁸⁹ but Hardy does generate a poetic coherence which manages the transfer. At the start, he presents Jude with a generalized vision of Christminster - 'What he saw was not the lamps in a row, as he had half expected. No individual light was visible, only a halo or glow-fog over-arching the place' (*JO*, 1.III)¹⁹⁰ - to see what he will do with it. Writing later on modern fiction, Woolf says that 'Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; but a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end'.¹⁹¹ What Jude does with this general haze is sublimate it into the particularized row of hanged children, and it is between these two metaphorical contrasts that Hardy creates his harmoniously dissonant reality.¹⁹² Though the vision's interactive integrity does destabilize, conclusions declaring artistic 'inability' are suspect, for we witness a conscious decision on Hardy's part to relinquish the feasibility of maintaining an imagined objectivity. He deliberately works against his original design and, via the deaths, collapses that carefully managed rhyming incoherence based on Jude's mental speculations and the narrator's material observations. Formerly so sympathetic, Sue and Jude 'mentally travelled in opposite directions since the tragedy' (*JO*, 6.III), and, to reflect this dislocation, so does the narrative perspective. The whole crumbles into its parts, the contrived artifice poignantly expressing that the 'series of seemings', even when graphically externalized, is essentially contradictory.

In this context, the juxtaposition of what seems and what is can only be worked out in terms of 'conscious rationalization',¹⁹³ the impossibility of transience manifesting itself in the mental devastation of Sue:

¹⁸⁸ Penelope Vigar, *The Novels of Thomas Hardy: Illusion and Reality* (London: Athlone Press, 1974), p. 210. For the relevant of this strategy to Hardy's verse, see James Gibson, "'The Characteristic of all Great Poetry - The General Perfectly Reduced in the Particular': Thomas Hardy", in *New Perspectives on Thomas Hardy*, ed. Charles P.C. Pettit (New York: St Martin's Press, 1994), pp. 1-15.

¹⁸⁹ F.B. Pinion, *Thomas Hardy: Art and Thought* (London: Macmillan, 1977), p. 113.

¹⁹⁰ Cp. 'Returning from Dorchester. Wet night. The town, looking back from S. Hill, is circumscribed by a halo like an aurora' (*PNB*, p. 11; Oct 1872).

¹⁹¹ Virginia Woolf, *Common Reader, First Series* (London: Hogarth Press, 1925), p. 189.

¹⁹² The same pattern is traced in *FMC*. During Fanny's journey to the workhouse she first looks at 'a distant halo which hung over the town of Casterbridge...Towards this weak, soft glow the woman turned her eyes. "If I could only get there!" she said. Next she is illuminated by 'a light - two lights - from a passing carriage'. As she nears her destination 'the Casterbridge lights were now individually visible' and her fall is proleptically expressed when, reaching the bottom of the town with the dog, 'the Casterbridge lamps lay before them like fallen Pleiads' (*FMC*, XL). Lawrence was later to use the image in *Sons and Lovers* (1913; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981): going home, Paul 'used to watch the lights of the town, sprinkled thick on the hills, fusing together in a blaze in the valleys...and he counted the lamps climbing the hill above him, how many more to pass' (1. 5).

¹⁹³ Vigar, *The Novels of Thomas Hardy*, p. 210.

Vague and quaint imaginings had haunted Sue in the days when her intellect scintillated like a star, that the world resembled a stanza or melody composed in a dream; it was wonderfully excellent to the half-roused intelligence, but hopelessly absurd at the full waking. (*JO*, 6.III)

What seems ordered when beheld through a semi-conscious haze is 'absurd' to the eye of the modern spirit, the 'waking' process shattering the world as a subjectively-'composed'¹⁹⁴ phenomenon. By allowing her eye to be 'cowed into submission' and conformity, Sue releases the full potential of the threatened 'chaos' into this section, and, in destroying her 'two-in-oneness' (*JO*, 6.II) with Jude, forces Hardy to rework the novel's perspective to integrate and convey the shift. Subsequent experiences are expressed in purely visual terms: tribulations have 'enlarged [Jude's] own views of life'; 'purblind' (*JO*, 6.III), he is an 'old man' (*JO*, 6.VI). Agony confers on Sue 'new and transcendental views'; her 'extraordinary blindness' to former ideologies transforms her into a 'little woman' (*JO*, 6.III). Perceptual presumption takes its toll:

'We are horribly sensitive; that's really what's the matter with us... Everybody is getting to feel as we do. We are a little beforehand, that's all... The time was not ripe for us! Our ideas were fifty years too soon to be any good for us.' (*JO*, 5.IV, 6.X)

Those who resist convention inherit obscurity, 'recklessness and ruin' (*JO*, 6.X).

The final chapters are wrapped in 'dreary...wandering fog' (*JO*, 6.V), and characters, no more substantial than 'Acherontic shades' (*JO*, 6.IV) driven by a 'blindly active Will',¹⁹⁵ pursue events mechanically. Jude returns to Arabella when he is 'half-somnolent', and reality is increasingly perceived as extrinsic to his mental eye. 'Intoxication takes away the nobler vision' (*JO*, 6.VIII) and the glorifying haze, and his 'throbbing eyeballs', debilitated by 'seeing double all the time' (*JO*, 6.VII), proscribe single vision.¹⁹⁶ The painful procedure of Jude's refocusing is Hardy's own 'Study in Pessimism':

Our abstract ideas, which are merely phrases fixed in the mind: real knowledge = result of our own observation...A man's knowledge may

¹⁹⁴ See the earlier references to the universal *concordia discors*.

¹⁹⁵ Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, II, 197.

¹⁹⁶ On the treatment of alcohol, and its relationship to Jude's childhood, see Mary-Ann Melfi, 'Jude the Obscure: Childhood Without Closure', *Durham University Journal*, 87:2 (July 1995), 315-20.

be said to mature when he has corrected his abstract ideas by observation.
(*LN*, II, 1799)¹⁹⁷

As a steady accumulation of crude details displaces illusions, speculative conceptions are shown to have precipitated a lifetime of misconceptions, and, 'Emerging with blind gropes from impercipient / By listless sequence' (*D*, I.V.iv), Jude regards his 'stupid fancies' in the hard light of day: "'all that has been spoilt for me by the grind of stern reality!'" (*JO*, 6.IX). Spiritually dead, his 'corpse-like face' anticipates his imminent physical demise. Belonging to neither realm - "'I am neither a dweller among men nor ghosts'" (ib.) - he is utterly lost.

This acerbic cynicism receives pointed illustration in the terrible glory of the novel's "conclusion" where 'shape and coherence' are summoned to restrain if not control the 'discordance'. Hardy said that 'in writing *Jude* my mind was fixed on the ending' (*LY*, p. 43; Jan 1896), and ten months after its completion noted the following:

Why the conclusions are not reached, notwithstanding everlasting palaver:
Men endeavour to hold to a mathematical consistency in things, instead of
recognizing that certain things may be both good and mutually antagonistic.
(*LY*, p. 54; Sept 1896)

Contemporary readers wanted a narrative that progressed logically to an ordered, reassuring conclusion. 'The ending is the apocalypse which records the significance of all that precedes',¹⁹⁸ it serves as a retrospective summation. Hardy's refusal to satisfy this demand in *Jude the Obscure* means that 'what we call the beginning is often the end',¹⁹⁹ the fruit of this non-conformity completing the ground-work for the modern novel and the satisfaction of a new kind of literary desire:

¹⁹⁷ Schopenhauer, *Studies in Pessimism*, p. 99.

¹⁹⁸ Phyllis Bentley, *The English Regional Novel* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1941), p. 45.

¹⁹⁹ Schwarz, 'Beginnings and Endings in Hardy's Major Fiction', p. 34, probably an echo of George Eliot's comment to Blackwood in 1857 that 'every limit is a beginning as well as an ending' (*The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954-78), II, 324; and *Middlemarch* (1872), ed. W.J. Harvey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), Finale). Eliot makes several deprecatory comments about conclusions in fiction and had, as A.S. Byatt notes in her introduction to *The Mill on the Floss* (1860; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), pp. 7-40, 'the true novelist's distaste for the arbitrary artificiality of endings' (p. 36). In the same letter to Blackwood she wrote that 'conclusions are the weak point of most authors, but some of the fault lies in the very nature of a conclusion, which is at best a negation' (*The George Eliot Letters*, II, 324); later she decrees that 'endings are inevitably the least satisfactory part of a work in which there is any merit of development' (ib., VI, 241-2); and 'even Shakespeare flags under the artificial necessities of a denouement' ('Art and Belles Lettres', *Westminster Review*, 65 (April 1856), 625-50 (p. 639). See also John Peck, 'Hardy's Novel Endings', *Journal of the Eighteen Nineties Society*, 9 (1978), 10-5, who argues that Hardy self-consciously exploits the artificiality of his conclusions.

merely to give *order*...is to provide consolation...We [in this century] want fiction not only to console but to make discoveries of the hard truth of here and now... discoveries of dissonance.²⁰⁰

Jude the Obscure, refusing totality and inclusiveness of vision in favour of disjunctions and plural perspectives, is Hardy's final examination of perceptual 'dissonance' as it relates to reality, 'the hard truth of here and now'.

In bringing the teleological line of narration into question, *Jude the Obscure* headed the tradition which would press on to a more open-ended fictional form.²⁰¹ Major thematic concerns are left unresolved, and analysis of the nominal ending reveals Hardy experimenting with a range of subversive techniques. Firstly, Mrs Edlin's counterpointed "'weddings be funerals nowadays'" (*JO*, 6.IX) deprives the marriage of its conventional effect;²⁰² secondly, the work's cyclical plot and 'iterative structure'²⁰³ of marriages and returns accentuate the sense of getting nowhere; thirdly, there is the 'prolonged pattern of Jude's gradually diminishing aspirations and the repeated checks on them',²⁰⁴ these valleys and troughs following a downward trend so that even the termination of Jude's life is jeopardized by the insinuated continuation of Sue's

²⁰⁰ Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending*, p. 179. See also Beverly Gross, 'Narrative, Time and the Open-ended Novel', *Criticism*, 8 (1966), 362-72; David Richter, *Fables' End: Completeness and Closure in Rhetorical Fiction* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1974); Marijane Torgovnick, *Closure in the Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

²⁰¹ See Vincent Newey, *Subjectivity: Society and Reading from Thomas Gray to Thomas Hardy* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995). Concentrating on the theme of selfhood and subjective experience in Romantic poetry and in the later novels that were its legacy, Newey traces the evolution of post-Enlightenment 'psychological man' into the proto-modernist preoccupation with the self as 'construct' in Byron and Hardy. Existentialism emerges as the fittest model of the human condition, stressing the need to create meaning in an impersonal world. For Lainsbury, "'Outside the gates of Everything": The Problem of Tragic Sensibility in *Jude the Obscure*', 'Jude is a novel which makes the very act of reading problematic by combining aspects of a modern sensibility with all the excesses of Victorian narrative conclusion' (p. 5).

²⁰² See Alan Friedman, 'Thomas Hardy: "Weddings Be Funerals"', in *The Turn of the Novel* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1966; rpt. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 38-74 (esp. pp. 71-4). See also Melanie Williams, 'The Law of Marriage in *Jude the Obscure*', *Nottingham Law Journal*, 5:2 (1996), 168-86, who argues, *inter alia*, that part of the novel's modernity is discovered in the disillusion associated with marriage and divorce laws. Williams also believes that Hardy deliberately concentrated on technically significant legal issues in order to expose the brutality and inhumanity of an unaccommodating system. It may also prove enlightening to compare the suffering caused by Sue's legal "tie" to Phillotson with Stephen Blackpool's to his degenerate wife in Dickens's *Hard Times* (1854), ed. Paul Schlicke (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), the sub-plot of which is partly concerned with the unfairness of marriage laws and the difficulty of obtaining a divorce. While Dickens was writing *Hard Times* in June 1854, the House of Lords introduced a Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Bill, and though it was withdrawn soon after, a similar bill was passed in 1857. As the title of the relevant chapter states, there was as yet 'No Way Out' (1. XI). Hardy made his own views on this topic quite clear in the 1912 Postscript to the novel (ed. Sisson, pp. 40-3), 'marriage laws being used in great part as the tragic machinery of the tale' (p. 41). He also manages a sarcastic jibe at Mrs Oliphant (her infamous 'The Anti-Marriage League' appearing in *Blackwood's Magazine*, CLIX (Jan 1896), 135-49): 'As for the matrimonial scenes, in spite of their "touching the spot", and the screaming of a poor lady in *Blackwood* that there was an unholy anti-marriage league afoot, the famous contract - sacrament I mean - is doing fairly well still, and people marry...as light-heartedly as ever...The author has even been reproached...that he has left the question where he found it, and has not pointed the way to a much-needed reform' (p. 42).

²⁰³ Schwarz, 'Beginnings and Endings in Hardy's Major Fiction', p. 34. See also Casagrande, *Unity in Hardy's Novels*, p. 203; and David Sonstroem, 'Order and Disorder in *Jude the Obscure*', *English Literature in Transition*, 24 (1981), 6-15 who presents a diagram of the monotonously repeated back and forth pattern of Jude's movements (p. 9). For a detailed analysis of the novel's time structure as regarding Jude's movements, see Dennis Taylor, 'The Chronology of *Jude the Obscure*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XII:3 (Oct 1996), 65-68. And, once again, *JO* crystallizes a narrative technique that Hardy has been practising from the start, most conspicuously in *PBE* and *MC*.

²⁰⁴ Robert Schweik, 'The "Modernity" of Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*', in *A Spacious Vision: Essays on Hardy*, ed. P.V. Mallett and R.P. Draper (Newmill: Patten Press, 1994 pp. 49-63 (pp. 52-3).

suffering²⁰⁵ The end, rather than resolving the narrative's problems, absorbs their uncertainty, Jude's early confession that he has acted "without seeing where I am going, or what I am aiming at" (*JO*, 2.VI), and his later admission, "I am lost in a chaos of principles - groping in the dark - acting by instinct and not after example" (*JO*, 6.I), rhyming with Hardy's authorial dilemma.²⁰⁶

Such statements automatically prevent a coherent finish, the last vision being one of internal dissonance. Disharmony is depicted through noise (there is no *musica concors*) and clashing colour, yet the cacophony's correlation of unrelated details implies a latent harmony in another transition from the general to the particular. At the same time that Jude first sees, or imagines, the prophetic 'halo or glow-fog' he hears, or persuades his ears, of a wind-borne message: 'Surely it was the sound of bells, the voice of the city, faint and musical, calling to him, "We are happy here!"' (*JO*, 1.III).²⁰⁷ As the luminous haze resolves into the horrific particulars of his dead children, so the musical atmosphere materializes on two climactic occasions: Jude stands rapt by 'a peal of bells' (*JO*, 6.I) that only he seems to hear on the day preceding the hangings; he himself lies dying the next time the 'bells began to ring, and the notes came into the room...and travelled round Jude's head in a hum' (*JO*, 6.XI), the aural equivalent of a visual haze. As 'faint as a bee's hum', the concert is drowned by the cheering crowds, an obliterating pattern registered in 'In Tenebris II' (*CP*, 137), written just after *Jude the Obscure*, where the 'shouts of the many and the strong' kill the 'low-voiced'. Despite such latent

²⁰⁵ According to Wilde, 'suffering...is the means by which we exist, because it is the only means by which we become conscious of existing' (*De Profundis*, p. 31). See Phillip Mallett, 'Sexual Ideology and Narrative Form in *Jude the Obscure*', *English*, 38:162 (Autumn 1989), 211-24; Samir Elbarbary, 'The Context and Analogies of Hardy's Sue's Sexless Fixation and Procreative Deconstructionist Argument', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 22 (Winter 1996), 54-62: 'The novel's feminine closure is in keeping with Victorian patriarchal discourse' (p. 57) in that Sue resigns herself to wifely submission. 'This marks the death of her text' (p. 57) and the triumph of the masculine.

²⁰⁶ Perhaps Jude is the 'inhabitant of a world to which the familiar world is a chaos' referred to by P.B. Shelley in 'A Defence of Poetry', in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. Donald H. Reiman and Sharon Powers (New York: Norton, 1977), pp. 478-508 (p. 505). Arnold, too, was obsessed with discovering the origin of the 'master-feeling' in 'Self-Deception' (1852) in which, anticipating Jude, he acknowledges that 'on earth we wander, groping, reeling' (lines 21, 23). This frustrated awareness was inherited and expanded by Beckett who was writing over half a century later: 'There will be new form, and...this form will admit the chaos and...not try to say that the chaos is really something else. The form and the chaos remain separate...To find a form to accommodate the mess, that is the task of the artist now' (cited by Tom F. Driver, 'Beckett by the Madeleine', *Columbia University Forum*, IV (Summer 1961), 22-3; rpt. *Samuel Beckett: The Critical Heritage*, eds. Lawrence Graver and Raymond Federman (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 218-9). The feeling that something was needed to formalize this disorientation was endemic, but the 'chaos' permeating the nineteenth century was of course different from that pervading the twentieth. Nevertheless, both artists were conscious of a disturbing sense of dislocation, of a separateness from a chaotic world in which there appeared to be no guiding or controlling Principle. For further discussions of Beckett's 'chaos', see David H. Helva, *The Shape of Chaos: An Interpretation of the Art of Samuel Beckett* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971), and Marjorie Perloff's "'The Space of a Door": Beckett and the Poets of Absence', in *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 200-47.

²⁰⁷ Hardy may be, consciously or otherwise, recalling Arnold's lines in 'Self-Dependence' (1852): 'O air-born voice! long since, severely clear, / A cry like thine in mine own heart I hear' (lines 29-30).

correspondences, the overall effect is one of dissonance, and the joy of the 'Hurrahs!' punctuating Jude's last words are unreservedly bitter, misplaced as they are.

This montage progression inverts the rhyming aural and visual images of earlier novels²⁰⁸ and subverts the metaphorical revelation of an image's/action's significance through equivalence, for rather than merging, the numerous ecstatic cries and the single despairing whispers clash. The connections are invidious, 'the joyous throb of a waltz' acting as the antithetical rhythm of the deadening thump of Jude's heart, and even the invitation Arabella receives to attend 'the boat-bumping' returns in her recognition that 'the bumping of near thirty years had ceased' when she listens for Jude's heart-beat.²⁰⁹ Despite the odd effect, the method insists that these 'events...rhyme' and gives a formal cohesion to the narrative while heightening our consciousness of the discrepancies underlying the novel's harmonies. Awareness of such grotesquerie incites the most disconcerting of articulations, ambiguous laughter, which Hardy used with devastating results to finish off *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved* (1892).²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ For example, Troy's expostulations at the taunting of his fellows become 'lost amid a low peal of laughter, which was hardly distinguishable from the gurgle of the tiny whirlpools outside' (*FMC*, XI); the dawn wind's stirring of the 'dead leaves which had lain still since yesterday' is repeated in Fanny's subsequent gesture: 'The woman desperately turned round upon her knees, and next rose to her feet' (*FMC*, XL); the sighing winds of Egdon lead into Eustacia's sigh, 'and her articulation was but as another phrase of the same discourse as theirs' (*RN*, 1.VI). The most perfect synthesis is achieved in at the birth of Avicé III: 'The sea moaned... These sounds were accompanied by an equally periodic moan from the interior of the cottage chamber; so that the articulate heave of water and the articulate heave of life seemed but differing utterances of the self-same troubled terrestrial Being' (*WB*, 3.13).

²⁰⁹ There is certainly as much tasteless humour surrounding Jude's death as there is surrounding the children's. Following the laying-out, Mrs Edlin and Arabella stand either side of the body gazing down upon it. The visual tragedy is completely subverted by the sheer inappropriateness of the verbal commentary which, characteristically with both women, is straightforward and disturbingly correct:

'How beautiful he is!' said she.

'Yes. He's a handsome corpse,' said Arabella. (*JO*, 6. XI)

The bathetic treatment encourages or dares the reader to at least smile, an action which would add a further dislocation. If we accept the invitation, we are shocked to find it repeated in the conjectured expression on the beautiful corpse's face: 'there seemed to be a smile of some sort upon the marble features of Jude'. The equivocal nature - 'a smile of some sort' - of the "seeming" turns it into the narrator's own interpretation: he sees a sneer at, and in, everything. And if this is accepted, then the conclusion to *JO* repeats, in a subtler, less obtrusive manner, the authorial 'Ho-ho-ho!' which effectively terminates *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved* (1892). There is also the possibility that Hardy had not only encountered the black comedy of Christina Rossetti's 'Sister Maude' (1860), in *The Poetical Works of Christina Georgina Rossetti*, ed. William Rossetti (London: Macmillan, 1928):

Cold he lies, as cold as stone,

With his clotted curls about his face:

The comeliest corpse in all the world

And worthy of a queen's embrace. (lines 5-8)

He may also have had in mind the comment of the vengeful sister following the murder in Tennyson's 'The Sisters':

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,

He look'd so grand when he was dead. (lines 32-3)

²¹⁰ 'How much lies in Laughter: the cipher-key, wherewith we decipher the whole man!' (Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, I. IV). This equivocal type of laughter is used most frequently in *FMC*. Troy is introduced as 'a low peal of laughter, which was hardly distinguishable from the gurgle of the tiny whirlpools outside' (*FMC*, XI), and he lets loose a 'low gurgle of derisive laughter' (*FMC*, XXXIV) at Boldwood's amatory predicament. When Fanny arrives at the work-house she confronts a stone edifice 'whereon stood... a few slim chimneys, now gurgling sorrowfully to the wind' (*FMC*, XL). But the hideous last laugh belongs to the 'gurgling' gargoyle: 'The creature had... laughed at the surrounding landscape... with a gurgling and snorting sound' (*FMC*, XLVI). The confession scene in *TD* reaches its crescendo in the 'satirical laughter' of Clare, 'horrible laughter - as unnatural and ghastly as laugh in hell' (*TD*, XXXV). Hardy's admission that 'in laughter there are more dreadful phases than in tears' (*FMC*, XXXV), is borne out in the close of *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved* (1892). Pearson's macabre merriment in discovering a 'sudden sense of the grotesqueness of things', results in 'an irresistible fit... so violent as to be an agony'. This 'hysterical' paroxysm provides the "'ending to my would-be romantic history!" 'Ho-ho-ho!' the original punctuation actually giving the narrator the last laugh. Gabriel Josipovici's definition of the end of Beckett's *The Unnameable* as 'a gurgle of icy laughter' (*The Modern Novel* (London: Open Books: 1979), p. 173) is a significant indication of just how close Hardy's final novels are to being identified as early modernist texts.

These rigid juxtapositions, ostensibly artificial and unconvincing, exaggerate a series of situations that, in the ordinary scheme of things, are overlooked, and, as Sisson justly argues, 'there are, as always with Hardy...awkwardnesses which one wishes away, but which it is in the end wrong to wish away because they convey his own sense of the unmanageableness of things'.²¹¹ Such glaring structural awkwardnesses and visual discords, though disruptive, are indispensable given the formal economy of the narrative perspective, and Hardy's feeling about the work - 'it is a mass of imperfections' (*LY*, p. 43; Jan 1896) - may refer as much to these disturbances as to artistic achievement. Though the balanced visual/formal collapse has nothing to do with authorial ineptitude, it may have been exacerbated by circumstances beyond Hardy's control. If the plurality of the vision does not cohere and Hardy is seen to have failed in resolving all of the contradictions, then the fault lies with Victorian literary expectation and allowance. *Jude the Obscure* attempts to contain and expound an impression which it cannot accommodate as the necessary 'rule, prescription' or 'law of transmutation' which turns 'the expression of one language into those of another' (*JO*, 1.IV) was not yet accessible to Hardy. And if the novel does disintegrate into ambiguity because the requisite shape and context is still 'powerless to be born',²¹² one must appreciate the ingenuity of the endeavour to convey a work of art that is forever in process. It is at once 'fixed and fluid, over-emphatic and true to life. Events which seemed contrived precipitate inner changes which are painfully authenticated'.²¹³

These multiple visions take *Jude the Obscure* out of its own time and realize a 'conscious[ness] of new harmonies & dissonances' (*LN*, I, 1354).²¹⁴ Hardy's search for a fictional form which could hold together such contrasts without itself falling into complete disharmony had ended; *Jude the Obscure* identified the preliminaries of the necessary pattern, and its ending which becomes a new beginning illuminated the way for Lawrence,²¹⁵ each writer tending to point beyond the literary conclusion to the

²¹¹ C.H. Sisson's introduction to the Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978 edition, pp. 11-26 (p. 25).

²¹² Arnold, 'Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse', line 86.

²¹³ Mary Jacobus, 'Sue the Obscure', *Essays in Criticism*, XXV (1975), 304-28 (p. 320).

²¹⁴ Vernon Lee, 'A Dialogue on Novels', *Contemporary Review*, XLVIII, (Sept 1885), 381-3.

²¹⁵ Ian Gregor, *The Great Web: The Form of Hardy's Major Fiction* (London: Faber & Faber, 1974), feels that 'where *Jude* ends *The Rainbow* begins' (p. 233).

possibility of a life outside the text. Toward the end of *Women in Love* (1921), Gerald observes, "'It isn't finished. We must put some sort of finish on it. There must be a conclusion, there must be finality'".²¹⁶ This sort of tidy resolution is not an option in *Jude the Obscure*. Bourget's *Nouveaux Essais de Psychologie Contemporaine* (1886) praises those who, in the face of opposition, pushed the art of the novel forward, his panegyric prophesying the intimidating though revolutionary advent of *Jude the Obscure*:

Ils créaient une forme particulière de roman, qui se trouve capable d'exprimer mieux qu'aucune autre les maladies morales de l'homme moderne, et pour écrire ce roman, ils inventaient et mettaient en pratique une sorte de style si entièrement neuve que les meilleurs juges de leur époque en furent étonnés.
(*LN*, I, 1557)²¹⁷

As an innovative and refined distillation of the ironic disequilibrium existing between appearance and reality, the objective and the subjective vision, of 'les maladies...de l'homme moderne', it is right that this should be Hardy's last major prose work.

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²¹⁶ Lawrence, *Women in Love*, Ch. XXX.

²¹⁷ Paul Bourget, *Nouveaux Essais de Psychologie Contemporaine* (Paris, 1886), pp. 137-9.

IX

CONCLUSION:

'THE DARK HORSE OF CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH LITERATURE'¹

A man of independent tastes...who unconsciously, and perhaps unhappily, took greater pleasure in floating in lonely currents of thought than with the general tide of opinion. (*La*, Ch. 1)

This complexity of origin is, I believe, to a great extent the cause of my seeming inconsistency. I am double, as it were. (*LN*, I, 1393)²

While experiencing Hardy's 'series of seemings, or personal impressions', reader and character alike bear the 'perception of the FAILURE of THINGS to be what they are meant to be' (*EL*, p. 163; Jan 1879). This apophthegm is accepted without question in 1895; no corrective is insinuated or made available as it was twenty-one years earlier, and however asynchronous and disturbing the mature vision appears, Hardy's blunt delineation of what Hazlitt termed 'the difference between what things are and what they ought to be'³ is unrelenting. Each novel, from *A Pair of Blue Eyes* to *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, grapples unflinchingly with the appearance/reality paradox by peering through a preconceived eye, be it petrified, moral, intellectual, public, jaundiced, or affective. But in *Jude the Obscure* no character wields the 'proper perspective', none has an adequately developed perceptual sensibility, all eyes are impotent, dead. Working 'blindly' from the outset, Jude and Sue are forever 'groping in the dark' (*JO*, VI.1), reality is obscured beyond lucid recognition, and Hardy concedes with cynical resignation to Ruskin's premise that 'WE NEVER SEE ANYTHING CLEARLY...so that there is literally *no* point of clear sight, and there never can be' (*Works*, VI, 75-6).

A contextual analysis of Hardy as thinker and writer illuminates his subversive approach to conventional literary realism, and consideration of the material he read during the conception and production of individual texts facilitates the construction of a picture, no matter how inconclusive or ambiguous, of some of the ideas he deemed of

¹ *LY*, p. 178; Oct 1917.

² Ernest Renan, *Recollections of My Youth*, trans C.B. Pitman (London, 1883), p. 133.

³ Hazlitt, William, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P.P. Howe, 21 vols (London and Toronto: Dent, 1930-34), VI, 5.

sufficient relevance to his own artistic pursuits. And, with characteristic ambiguity, Hardy is as disinclined to make an unequivocal gesture here as elsewhere. One moment he makes an epicene and deflective confession: 'I have no philosophy - merely what I have often explained to be only a heap of confused impressions like those of a bewildered child at a conjuring show' (*LY*, p. 218; Dec 1920);⁴ the next he is informative and objective: 'My pages show harmony of view with Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Comte, Hume, Mill, and others (all of whom, as a matter of fact, I used to read more than Sch[openhauer])' (*CL*, VI, 259).⁵

Although Hardy's familiarity with current thinking saturated his mind and work, he was not a philosopher in the traditional sense (he repudiated the insinuation himself), and any approach which, applying this standard, finds him wanting, inconsistent and awkward is unfair. As early as 1882 Hardy conceived a mistrust of the theoretical pursuit of abstract rationalization:

Since I discovered, several years ago, that I was living in a world where nothing bears out in practice what it promises incipiently, I have troubled my self very little about theories (*EL*, p. 201; Autumn 1882).

And by the mid 1890s, despite a lifetime of voracious study, a growing cynicism eroded his reliance on contemporary thought, an oblique comment in *Jude the Obscure* crystallizing this sense of fruitlessness: "'I had a neat stock of fixed opinions, but they dropped away one by one; and the further I get the less sure I am'", little more is offered as a "'present rule of life than following inclinations'" (*JO*, VI.1). This despondency reached its apex at the turn of the century. Feeling misled, betrayed and disappointed by the inherent 'contradictions and futilities' of the 'philosophic systems' in which he had immersed himself (*LY*, p. 91; Dec 1901), Hardy acknowledged the futility of expecting any receptive mind to 'escape from using terms and phraseology from earlier philosophers' even while he advised against 'adopting their theories if he values his own

⁴ See Timothy Hands, 'A Bewildered Child and his Conjurers': Hardy and the Ideas of his Time', in *New Perspectives on Thomas Hardy*, ed. P.C. Pettit (London: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 137-55. Joanna Gibson, 'Thomas Hardy: A Borrowing from Schopenhauer', *Notes and Queries*, 40:4 (Dec 1993), 429-3, contends Hardy's notes show a debt to images in Schopenhauer's *Studies in Pessimism* for the 'bewildered child' figure.

⁵ See G. Glen Wickens, 'Literature and Science: Hardy's Response to Mill, Huxley and Darwin', *Mosaic*, 14:3 (Summer 1981), 63-79.

mental life...*Let every man make a philosophy for himself out of his own experience*' (LY, p. 91; Dec 1901). The eye of I is supreme, and Hardy's self-directed frustration is a realization that, like Coleridge, he could have 'saved years of labour by working out his own views' instead of depending on those of others (ib.).

Hardy's consistent contradictions are endemic to his theory and practice: he acted by instinct, yet worked after example; his work is simultaneously innovative and derivative, yet he is undeniably an imaginative artist who strives to render 'a coherent view of life's apparent inconsistencies, to give shape to the amorphous, to discover beauty which was hidden, to reveal essential truth' (LN, II, 2072).⁶ Despite his extensive absorption and creative reinterpretation of current ideas, Hardy neither subscribed to, nor followed, any one school; his idiosyncratic mode of regard merely left him more susceptible and sympathetic to certain concepts at certain times, though his admission that the 'Novels of Character and Environment' constituted 'those which approach most nearly to uninfluenced works' (GP, p. 44), should be treated with circumspection, especially given the careful qualification. Even so, as Gosse noted in 1909, 'the ideas which animated Mr Hardy's books were already present in his mind, and were the result of temperament and observation, rather than of "influence"'.⁷ Indeed, whatever superficial resemblances seem to connect him to others, Hardy is fundamentally unlike any other, his differences being sufficient to obstruct uncomplicated comparison with his contemporaries, and to sabotage any attempt to devise his literary aesthetic; he evades neat or convenient definition. The only absolutes are his non-conformity and calculated provocation of creative controversy, his militant tendencies actively taking advantage of the seventy-year-old recognition that 'the old ideas have become obsolete, and the new are not yet constructed' (LY, p. 88; May 1901).⁸ Ostensibly, he may have followed Arnold's injunction - '*acquire the best ideas attainable in or about your time* - which are, so to speak, in the air' (LN, I, 1181)⁹ - but only, it appears, to radically revise and reinterpret them.

⁶ 'Mr J.M. Barrie. An Inquiry', *Academy*, LIX (Nov 10, 1900), 445.

⁷ Edmund Gosse, *Spectator* (Feb 8, 1879), p. 182; Gosse to Hedgcock, July 28, 1909; collection of Mr Frederick Adams.

⁸ See n. 119 of chapter on JO.

⁹ Cited Matthew Arnold, 'The Literary Influence of Critics', *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*, ed. R.H. Super, 11 vols (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960-77), III, 248.

From the beginning, Hardy, one of those 'modern men trying to find a pictorial language appropriate to the sensibilities of the modern outlook' (*LN*, II, 2415),¹⁰ sought an art form which would communicate 'the modern expression of a modern outlook' (*D*, I, Fore Scene), and in running counter to the inertia of orthodox beliefs, he openly courted adverse criticism and earned his reputation as 'the Dark Horse of contemporary English literature' (*LY*, p. 178; Oct 1917). Moreover, he accepted responsibility for being critically misconstrued, and confessed to having 'handicapped' himself:

By over-stepping the standard boundary set up for the thought of the age by the proctors of opinion, I have thrown back my chance of acceptance... by many years. The very fact of my having tried to spread over art the latest illumination of the time has darkened counsel in respect of me. (ib.)

A vociferous denunciation of the era's sterile conservatism in 1904 consolidated his intolerance: the present age, staunchly resisting the ancient, 'not only does not ask for a new thing, but even shies at that which merely appears at first sight to be a new thing' (*D:PS* 2, p. 145), and Arnold's remedy, to 'express *new* and profound ideas in a perfectly sound and classical style' (*LN*, I, 1182),¹¹ underpins Hardy's defiant 'new' fiction. The 'instinctive, primitive, narrative shape' (*D:R* I, p. 142) demands 'the freedom of the workers therein from the restraint of...scientific reasoning' and rational development (*D:R* I, p. 141), freedom, it seems, from the nominally but not practically emancipating prescriptions advocated by James. Taking advantage of the capriciousness of 'the artistic spirit' (ib.), particularly its refusal to conform to expectation at the expense of innovation, Hardy shows how the fictional text is 'not a representation, but...a means of reproducing a representation' (*D:R* I, p. 142); the 'true tale' immanent within the narrative pattern is accessed and transmitted 'by sheer imaginativeness' (ib.) alone, by an 'instinctive, primitive' conception and comprehension of reality.

Even a cursory survey of Hardy's artistic, and wholly unsystematic, rewriting of his studies uncovers a plethora of incongruities, and by fronting a confusing persona, as one enigmatic yet single-minded, as an intensely private yet public figure, Hardy supplied

¹⁰ Roger Fry, 'The French Group', see pp. 25-8.

¹¹ Arnold, *Works*, III, 247-8.

criticism with one constant at least, his idiosyncratic trademark: uniform dissonance. And just as Eagleton reasons that Hardy was 'ambiguously placed' socially, so his situation

as a literary producer was riddled with contradictions...contradictions
inseparable from his fraught relations to the metropolitan audience
whose spokesman rejected his first abrasively radical work.¹²

Ambivalence structures the Wessex Novels which, radical in their formal contravention of traditional regulations, and replete with structural anomalies and unsubstantiated assumptions, do not even make the slightest conciliatory effort to provide a creditable, alternative value system to replace those rejected. Hardy's admission of these limitations may in part explain his later reticence to account for his theories.

By 1904, the 'impersonated abstractions...called Spirits' which function as the 'supernatural spectators' of that explicit mental drama, *The Dynasts*, are governed by a prescriptive code of formal and ontological incoherence which approximates Hardy's own: 'Their doctrines are tentative, and are advanced with little eye to a clear metaphysic, or systemized philosophy warranted to lift "the burthen of the mystery" of this unintelligible world' (*D*, Pref).¹³ These 'phantasmal Intelligences' correspond to 'the spectator idealized' of the Greek Chorus, also 'impressionable and inconsistent in its views' (ib.), and derive their indeterminacy from their subjective conception; like the Chorus at the end of Part First, they issue

from the mind
Of human kind
Which was late so dusk, and obscene, and blind.

And, no doubt satisfying his love of paradox, Hardy's philosophy of contradictions accords with the chaos and inscrutability of the human predicament as perceived in the context of Spencer's 'Unknowable' universe.

Motivated by the belief that the current climate was less equipped than its classical predecessor to 'look through the insistent, and often grotesque, substance of the

¹² Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology* (London: Verso, 1978), p. 30.

¹³ Cp: 'the drama [is] advanced not as a reasoned system of philosophy, nor as a new philosophy, but as a poem, with the discrepancies that are to be expected in an imaginative work' (*LY*, p. 103; Jan 1904).

thing signified' (*D*, Pref) to its significance, Hardy channelled his creative energies into correcting, through representative literary examples, the defect he saw as symptomatic of the modern eye. The moral impetus motivating this perceptual remodification justified a didactic approach, but his assumption of 'a completion of the action by those to whom the drama is addressed' (ib.) (recalling his provocative demand in 1888 for 'a generous imaginativeness, which shall find in the tale not only all that was put there by the author...but...what was never inserted by him' (*PRF*, p. 112)), reaffirmed his unwelcome inventiveness. Given the generally conservative climate in which Hardy worked, this strategy is indicative of his forward-thinking: 'Hardy is modern in seducing his reader to contribute to and interact with the text to interpret the message'.¹⁴

By the end of his writing career, Hardy stood, like Arnold's 'aliens', straddling two literary eras, 'wandering between two worlds, / One dead, the other powerless to be born',¹⁵ but this ambiguous literary condition had been potential from the outset. Hardy himself speaks of his poems written before 1871 as 'dissolving...into prose' in *Desperate Remedies*.¹⁶ Extending Johnson's critique, Barton holds that *The Dynasts* 'stands midway between [Hardy's] poetry and his fiction',¹⁷ Bailey places it against the novels of the 1890s, classifying them as unrealistic and realistic respectively;¹⁸ Widdowson forwards the work as 'a comment on Hardy's uneasy relation to realist fiction and an indication that prose...would transmogrify into poetic... "Moments of Vision"',¹⁹ Holland discovers both categories in *Jude the Obscure* where he contends the shift from realism to symbolism takes place;²⁰ and Ingham finds 'his last novels...dissolving into poetry'.²¹ Despite the lack of consensus regarding the exact moment of transition, all identify the movement

¹⁴ Gayla R. Steel, *Sexual Tyranny in Wessex: Hardy's Witches and Demons of Folklore* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), p. 8.

¹⁵ Matthew Arnold, 'Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse', lines 85-6, in *The Poems of Matthew Arnold*, ed. Miriam Allott (London and New York: Longman, 2nd edn., 1979).

¹⁶ Preface to 1912 edn. of *DR*.

¹⁷ J.E. Barton, 'The Poetry of Thomas Hardy' (1923), in Lionel Johnson's *The Art of Thomas Hardy* (1894; rpt. London: The Bodley Head, 1923), pp. 259-95 (p. 265).

¹⁸ J.O. Bailey, *Thomas Hardy and the Cosmic Mind: A New Reading of 'The Dynasts'* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 1956).

¹⁹ Peter Widdowson, *Thomas Hardy* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1996), p. 78.

²⁰ Norman Holland, 'Jude the Obscure: Hardy's Symbolic Indictment of Christianity', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 9 (1954), 50-60 (p. 50).

²¹ Patricia Ingham, 'Provisional Narratives: Hardy's Final Trilogy', in *Alternative Hardy*, ed. Lance St John Butler (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 49-73 (p. 49). See also Mary Ann Gillies, 'Thomas Hardy: Modernist Poet', *Modern Language Quarterly*, 51 (Dec 1990), 535-4. One of the most informative contemporary analyses of the relation between poetry and prose is J.S. Mill's 'What is Poetry?' (1833), in *Early Essays of J.S. Mill*, ed. J.W.M. Gibbs (London: Bell, 1897) pp. 201-17: 'the word "poetry" does import... something which may exist in what is called prose as well as in verse' (p. 201). However, 'the faculty of the poet and that of the novelist are...distinct...The two characters may be united...but they have no natural connection' (p. 203). The existence of the Hardy canon certainly brings this theory into question.

into the symbolic. This development is undeniable, but the argument offered in this thesis shows that the symbolic is integral to all of Hardy's work, and that the 'transition' from prose to poetry is a fallacy. The spirit of the latter is latent in the former, as Hardy's earliest critics appreciated: Patmore felt that *A Pair of Blue Eyes* was 'not a conception for prose' and warranted immortalization through 'the form of verse' (*EL*, p. 138; March 1875); and Stephen 'admired the poetry which was diffused through the prose' (*LY*, p. 75; July 1898) of *Far from the Madding Crowd*.

Such critiques pinpoint Hardy's resistance of contemporary norms and his proximity, especially with *Jude the Obscure* and *The Well-Beloved*, to Modernist fiction. Friedman charts 'the unmistakable shift, and a period of transition',²² in the evolution of the novel which 'was gradual, but...took place...with great velocity at about the turn of the century',²³ and Bradbury, elaborating on this 'turn', comments:

It is a turn which distinguishes, say, the later work of Henry James from that of George Eliot, or separates the work of Lawrence from the work of Hardy...[I]t brought about an enormous alteration in the novel's nature, structure and mode of activity, so that a new period or phase of style seems to emerge.²⁴

Hardy's contribution to this change must not be underestimated, for if 'an essential feature of the twentieth-century novel is the presence of a new kind of self-awareness, an introversion of the novel to a degree unprecedented in its fortunes',²⁵ then Hardy, acutely sensible of the formal and psychological potential of introspective self-consciousness, had been laying the foundations from the late 1870s. The degree of 'introversion' may have been 'unprecedented' but not unanticipated, for Hardy had totally reversed orthodox ideologies: what had been assigned private status was now construed as public, a state which dissolved the margin separating objective from subjective.

The Hardy canon, much like Fitzpiers, the quintessential scientific-aesthete, stands as a perceptual and epistemological laboratory designed to generate something vital and new from dead, obsolete material, its creator's eclectic graftings from current

²² Alan Friedman, *The Turn of the Novel: The Transition to Modern Fiction* (1966; rpt. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. xv.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁴ Malcolm Bradbury, *Possibilities: Essays on the State of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 81.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

bodies of work producing something dangerously enterprising though much misunderstood. He began his career yearning after a coherent perspective on reality, but ended by accepting the 'chaos of principles' and its accompanying plurality of vision as the only way of expressing the desired uniformity; there are no universal truths to uncover, merely a variety of ways of making sense of reality. Coherence and incoherence are a matter of perceptual relativity, and Wessex, as it coalesces from the late 1880s onward, is not so much a single body of many parts as a kaleidoscopic impression of a whole, an enigmatic symbol about symbolism's pursuit of a definite or absolute reality.

For over a quarter of a century Hardy was engaged in 'feeling his way to a method' (*DR*, Pref) which would make vividly visible the 'contrarious inconsistencies' (*MC*, XLIV) which shape our perceptions of reality, successive novels teaching us how to perceive that shifting state 'With larger other eyes than ours'.²⁶ The difficulty arose from the non-existence of a suitable literary structure; Hardy's controversial experiments were a step in that direction, and, having exhausted the current reservoirs of the fictional form by 1895, it is difficult to speculate where he could have gone from there. Yet, given the unfinishedness, openendedness and general dissonance of a work like *Jude the Obscure*, his frequent advice that his work 'would be unintelligible without supplementary scenes of the imagination' (*D*, Pref) is a pertinent indicator as to the future evolution of the literary text.

Gregor suggests that where *Jude the Obscure* ends *The Rainbow* begins.²⁷ The perceptual attitude Hardy adopted in his 'exploration of reality, and its frank recognition stage by stage along the survey' (*LLE*, p. 52), certainly pre-empts the kind of response that Lawrence was to expect, but at this stage in the rise of the modern novel, Hardy's inspired manipulation and treatment of the form was far too ambitious to be acceptable,

²⁶ Alfred Tennyson, *In Memoriam* (1850), in *The Complete Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1898), LI, 15.

²⁷ Ian Gregor, *The Great Web: The Form of Hardy's Major Fiction* (London: Faber & Faber, 1974), p. 233. See K.W. Salter, 'Lawrence, Hardy, and "The Great Tradition"', *English*, 22 (Summer 1973), 60-5; Mark Kinkead-Weekes, 'Lawrence on Hardy', in *Thomas Hardy After Fifty Years*, ed. Lance St John Butler (London: Macmillan, 1977), pp. 90-103; Robert Langbaum, 'Hardy and Lawrence', *Thomas Hardy Annual: No. 3*, ed. Norman Page (London: Macmillan, 1985), 15-38; Peter J. Casagrande, 'Now it Begins': Hardy and D.H. Lawrence', in *Hardy's Influence on the Modern Novel* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 32-61; Rosemary Sumner, 'The adventure to the unknown': Hardy, Lawrence and Developments in the Novel', in *A Spacious Vision: Essays on Hardy*, eds. Phillip Mallett and R.P. Draper (Newmill: Patten Press, 1994), pp. 66-78; Robert Langbaum, 'Hardy and Lawrence', in *Thomas Hardy in Our Time* (London: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 1-26. Merryn Williams, 'Hardy the Victorian', in *A Preface to Hardy* (London and New York: Longman, 1976; 2nd edn. 1993), pp. 54-84, states this literary truth at the start of the chapter: Hardy 'was not a typical Victorian; to many of us he now seems to exemplify the more modern, adventurous, questioning spirit which came into literature about the turn of the century and led on directly to the work of D.H. Lawrence' (p. 54).

and his *oeuvres* too experimental: "The time was not ripe for us! Our ideas were fifty years too soon to be any good to us" (*JO*, 6.X), they may cry, for they had, in the words of Bourget discussing 'l'art du roman', 'pousse a leur extreme quelque etats de l'ame, dont le plein developpement n'apparait que dans la generation suivante' (*LN*, I, 1557).²⁸

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²⁸ Paul Bourget, *Nouveaux Essais de Psychologie Contemporaine* (Paris, 1886), pp. 137-9.

APPENDIX: 'THE REAL OFFENCE'¹

Art lives upon discussion, upon experiment, upon curiosity, upon variety of attempt, upon the exchange of views and the comparison of standpoints... Discussion, suggestion, formulation, these things are fertilizing when they are frank and sincere.²

Observe: that was Balzac's great secret. Copy: that is the secret of the great painters. If the word realism is new, the thing is not. Realism has existed as long as literature has existed; with its rays it has illuminated the works of many geniuses who have followed after each other and it has made their fortune. The day has come when it is recognized and has been given a name.³

Appearances too, like other things, must have a cause, and that which can *cause* anything, even an illusion, must be a reality.⁴

'What is realism if not the sense of the simple truth of nature...[of] imperishable life?'⁵ Bertz's rhetorical definition assumes its own obviousness and regards, like Duranty, nineteenth-century concepts of realism as nothing new, the ideology as it was currently understood dating from the middle of the eighteenth century. The 1750s found mankind questioning the origins of his existence, and ontological interrogations, no longer the exclusive preserve of theology, were subjected to scientific enquiry. This empirical methodology and system of interrogation continued into the nineteenth century, Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859) bringing the social and scientific spheres into enlightened disillusionment, and provoking a fevered re-orientation of man's relative universal position. The ubiquitous sense of crisis was so profound that the expressive arts, unable to maintain immunity, were obliged to articulate these radical upheavals, and nineteenth-century novels are in part characterized by their assimilation of the contemporary climate of doubt and uncertainty. Within this context, creative artists

¹ *D:PS* 2, p. 145.

² Henry James, 'The Art of Fiction', in *The House of Fiction: Essays on the Novel by Henry James*, ed. Leon Edel (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1957), p. 24. Hereafter cited parenthetically in the text as *AF*. Cp. Christopher Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality: A Study of the Sources of Poetry* (1937; rpt. Woodstock, New York: BEEKMAN, 1973): 'Art is one of the conditions of man's realization of himself, and in its turn one of the realities of man' (p. 239).

³ Edmond Duranty, *Realisme*, 1 (July 10, 1856); rpt. in part in *Documents of Modern Literary Realism*, ed. George Becker (Princeton, New Jersey: University of Princeton Press, 1963), p. 97. Hereafter cited as *DMLR*.

⁴ J.S. Mill, 'What is Poetry?' (1833), in *Early Essays of J.S. Mill*, ed. J.W.M. Gibbs (London: Bell, 1897), pp. 201-17 (p. 202).

⁵ Eduard Bertz on Gissing, *Deutsche Press* (Nov 1889), rpt. *Gissing: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Pierre Coustillas (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 149-156 (p. 150).

confronted common problems regarding the form and content of their work, and were engaged in a common pursuit: bringing order to chaos, and accommodating diverse and dissonant elements into a harmonious, autonomous whole.⁶

To a greater or lesser degree, all of the novels of the mid-nineteenth century interrogate the consequences of the current condition of unease until 'all that remains is the act of perception itself'.⁷ Christ takes the Victorian obsession with attention to detail to 'signify both the solipsism the Victorians feared and their last attempt to discover order in the world of things',⁸ and locates this acute anxiety in

the tension between subjectivism and objectivism...[and] the fragmentation of the Romantic understanding of a world we half perceive and half create into a frantic search for the reality of objects and a growingly burdensome conviction of the isolating subjectivity of all experience.⁹

The disparity between the private (subjective) and the public (objective) reaches back at least to the Romantics,¹⁰ but whereas early Victorian prose writers like Carlyle emphasized discrimination as both a fact and a necessity, the novelists endeavoured to reconcile the two states, and articulate the associations between inconsistencies and dichotomies, in a creative rather than a discursive manner. Dickens's novels, illustrating how the conceived ideal and the actual reality were mutually interactive and sustaining, demonstrated how the external facts and aspects are recreated through juxtaposition with the lucidity of the inner realm. This kind of formal integrity whereby 'incident shall be reconciled with the subjective spirit'¹¹ was envisaged as the model toward which the perfect novel should aspire.

⁶ Cp. the objective of the first half of the century as defined by Carlyle: 'To bring what order we can out of this Chaos shall be part of our endeavour' (*Sartor Resartus: The Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh* (1832; London: Chapman & Hall, 1870), Bk. I. Ch. IV). J.A. Froude, *Thomas Carlyle: A History of His Life in London, 1834-1881*, 2 vols (London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1884), described the earlier part of the Victorian age as one in which the spirit of enquiry had prompted the greatest minds to interrogate received certainties. It was a time when 'all around us, the intellectual lightships had broken from their moorings...The present generation which has grown up in an open spiritual ocean, which has got used to it and learned to swim for itself, will never know what it was to find the lights all drifting, the compasses all awry, and nothing left to steer by except the stars' (I, 290-1).

⁷ Judith Ryan, 'The Vanishing Subject: Empirical Psychology and the Modern Novel', *PMLA*, 95 (Oct 1980), 857-69 (p. 867).

⁸ Carol T. Christ, *The Finer Optic: The Aesthetics of Particularity in Victorian Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), p. 13.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹⁰ See M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), Ch. IX, Section iii: 'Subjective and Objective in English Theory', pp. 241-4, for a full discussion of the term's evolution.

¹¹ Anon., 'Belles Lettres', *Westminster Review*, XLIV, n.s. (1873), 254-70 (p. 254).

The Dickensian pattern was revised by his successors, Hardy included, but under different circumstances. The 'conflicts...and antagonisms, between the forces of the world and the forces of the human soul',¹² between objective and subjective, were used by Johnson in 1894 as a means of distinguishing early from later writers:

the modern novel differs from its predecessors mainly in this: that it is concerned, not with the storm and stress of great, clear, passions and emotions, but with the complication of them...There is a sense of entanglement: right and wrong, courage and cowardice, duty and desire, are presented to us in confused conflict¹³

The age of clarity and 'simplicity' was obsolete, and 'the troubled air' of the present was 'obscure with mists of doubt and difficulty'.¹⁴ Johnson pinpoints the idiosyncratic indeterminacy, the essentially 'shifting' as opposed to fixed nature, of the late works of the nineteenth century, and it was the indefinite, mutable nature of this fluidity which rendered the prescriptions governing orthodox realism redundant: 'we no longer use set phrase, or put forth a definite scheme: our work is full of permeating influences, unseen forces, cross currents, vague drifts and tendencies'.¹⁵ Nothing could be more true of this eclectic diffusion than the Hardy canon.

By the time that Hardy began his career, two major developments had taken place. Firstly, whereas the earlier Victorian novelists were preoccupied with an intense, objective scrutiny of contemporary culture, their successors realigned this angle, and by the time of *Jude the Obscure* (1895), the public sphere is so internalized that it is presented as a distorted, subjectively-refracted image. Secondly, the majority of *fin de siècle* writers share a consciousness of the irreconcilability of the mental and the physical, Hardy's mature novels delineating the unfeasibility of integrating internal and external, and characters who harbour and nourish such delusions are shown dissipating their lives in the process. As Springer appreciates:

Hardy saw no resolution for these conflicts, and was consequently haunted by the discrepancy between what seems and what is - the traditional ironic

¹² Lionel Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy* (1894; rpt. London: The Bodley Head, 1923), p. 178.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

contradiction...Because Hardy's ironic vision is the focal point of his philosophical outlook, it too inevitably invades his fictional world.¹⁶

For Buckler, 'the excitement in Hardy's work is generated, not by reconciliation, but by discrepancy, and his "truth" is that illusion recognized helps to avoid disillusion by reconciling us only to discrepancy'.¹⁷ Unlike the Brontes and Dickens, Hardy is determined to expose the irreparable disparity between sensibility and circumstance, and against such insurmountable odds 'it is difficult to adjust our outer and inner life with perfect honesty to all!' (*DR*, 13.4). Grundy sees Hardy using his characters' inner lives and experiences as 'a fusion, a meeting-place or battle-ground, of internal impulses and external pressures',¹⁸ and, in focusing on humanity's awareness of its isolation within a hostile social order, Hardy lays the foundation for one characteristic of the twentieth-century novel.

The 'mysterious awe' which Johnson attributes to 'the greatest modern novels' emanates from that 'obscure...background of shifting lights and colours...bred of modern introspection'.¹⁹ Hardy's progressive attempt to express this 'confused' condition generated not only a new kind of fiction but a new type of character, especially where women were concerned; as Humm observes, 'not only is Hardy giving a new idea of women but his uncertainties (or rather his new questions) of how they might be portrayed in the novel'.²⁰ The beginning of the century was dominated by Austen's highly-motivated heroines who consciously sought to will their spirits into accordance with preconceived social *mores*, but the end of the century found Hardy evolving heroines who were wilfully self-destructive.²¹ their urge was not to conform but to chart a journey into guilt, self-recrimination and bring about complete dissociation not only from objective standards, but from themselves as well.

¹⁶ Marlene Springer, *Hardy's Use of Allusion* (London: Macmillan, 1983), p. 12. Springer also traces the history of irony and looks briefly at Hardy's employment of the various modes.

¹⁷ William E. Buckler, *The Victorian Imagination: Essays in Aesthetic Exploration* (New York: New York University Press, 1980), p. 355.

¹⁸ Joan Grundy, *Hardy and the Sister Arts* (London: Macmillan, 1979), p. 10.

¹⁹ Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, p. 33.

²⁰ Maggie Humm, 'Gender and Narrative in Thomas Hardy', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 11 (1984), 41-8 (p. 41).

²¹ See Frank R. Giordano, *I'd Have My Life Unbe': Thomas Hardy's Self-Destructive Characters* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1984).

Hardy's novels stand apart because of their preoccupation with subjective resistance, a brand of realism which initiated an innovative, experimental tradition in modern English fiction founded on contradictions and discrepancies:

Resisting forms, it explores reality to find them; denying excess, it deserts the commonplace self-consciously asserted as its subject. Positing the reality of an external world, it self-consciously examines its own fictionality...The realistic novel persistently drives itself to question not only the nature of artificially imposed social relations, but the nature of nature, and the nature of the novel.²²

Rather than trying to resolve the tensions, Levine seizes the implications that these contradictions have, and they certainly hold for Hardy's works. No longer existing principally as an objective, social record, the novel assumed a new kind of importance in its framing of individuals' psychological histories. But identifying the strategy best equipped to communicate this viewpoint was another matter, and the central dilemma, finding the proper perspective from which the truest representation could be reconstructed, was aggravated by the lack of consensus over the correct literary style. Such confusion encouraged the proliferation of nominally realistic fictions which reflected a variegated array of solutions. It was 'just now very much the fashion to discuss the so-called principle of realism'.²³

DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW IN THE GREAT DEBATE

Henry James could hardly have predicted the heights this fashionable topic would reach. The essential meaning,²⁴ status, and application of the term comprised one of the most representative debates of the 1880s and revolved around James's 'The Art of Fiction'

²² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

²³ Henry James, 'The Schonberg-Cotta Family' (1865), in *Notes and Reviews*, ed. Pierre de Chagnon la Rose (Cambridge, Mass.: Dunster House 1921; rpt. New York: Books for Libraries, 1968), pp. 77-83 (p. 78).

²⁴ See E.B.O. Borgehoff, 'Realism and Kindred Words: Their Use as Terms of Literary Criticism in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century', *PMLA*, 53 (1938), 843-7. See Carl Matheson, 'Is the Naturalist Really Naturally a Realist?', *Mind*, 98 (April 1989), 247-58; Crawford L. Elder, 'Realism, Naturalism, and Culturally Generated Kinds', *Philosophical Quarterly*, 39 (Oct 1989), 425-44. For an explanation of the terms with special reference to literature, see Bernard Richards, 'Realism and Naturalism', *English Review*, 3 (Sept 1992), 34-7; and Harry Levin, 'What is Realism?', in *Contexts of Criticism* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1957).

(1884) (itself a response to Walter Besant's *The Art of Fiction* (1884)²⁵) and Robert Louis Stevenson's reply, 'A Humble Remonstrance' (1884), the submission of which can be seen as a tactical manoeuvre designed to keep the debate open.²⁶ James's essay exhibits a frustrated dissatisfaction with those conventions governing orthodox nineteenth-century realism which made it difficult for writers such as himself to create, for instance, extraordinary characters, and is a model example of the convoluted assertions and counter-assertions that fuelled the polemic surrounding the definition of the term.

Interpreting the relationship between art and life was a considerable challenge. James's contention that 'the only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life' (*AF*, p. 25) exposes his technical approach to fiction, but contradicts his original response: 'the only reason for the existence of a novel is that it *does* compete with life'. The emendation, coinciding with the publication of *Partial Portraits* in 1888, was a direct consequence of Stevenson taking issue with the assumption that art cannot even begin to 'compete' with life's intrinsic multiplicity and variety,²⁷ the argument arising from an excessively literal explanation of the concept:

To 'compete with life', whose sun we cannot look upon...to compete with the flavour of wine...is, indeed, a projected escalade of heaven...No art is true in this sense: none can 'compete with life': not even history, built of indisputable facts, but of these facts robbed of their vivacity and sting.²⁸

²⁵ Walter Besant, *The Art of Fiction* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1884). Besant also contributed the following to the polemic: 'The Value of Fiction', *Belgravia*, 16 (1872), 48-51; 'Candour in English Fiction', *New Review*, 2 (1890), 6-9; 'The Science of Fiction', *New Review*, 4 (1891), 310-15; *The Pen and the Book* (London: Thomas Burleigh, 1899).

²⁶ See William C. Frierson, 'The English Controversy over Realism in Fiction, 1885-95', *PMLA*, 43 (1928), 533-50.

²⁷ Mark Spika argues, in 'Henry James and Walter Besant: "The Art of Fiction" Controversy', in *Towards a Poetics of Fiction*, ed. Mark Spika (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1977), that James discarded the objectionable word 'before its final meaning had become apparent' (p. 207). See also John Goode, 'The Art of Fiction: Walter Besant and Henry James', in *Tradition and Tolerance in Nineteenth Century Fiction*, eds. David Howard, John Lucas, and John Goode (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 243-81.

²⁸ Stevenson, 'A Humble Remonstrance', *Henry James and Robert Louis Stevenson: A Record of Friendship and Criticism*, ed. Janet A. Smith (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1948), pp. 86-100 (p. 90). Hereafter cited parenthetically in the text as *HR*. Oscar Wilde was later to reverse the process: 'I treated art as the supreme reality and life as a mere mode of fiction' (*De Profundis* (1905; London: Methuen & Co., 1949), p. 77), and claimed that 'Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life' ('The Decay of Lying: An Observation', *Nineteenth-Century*, XXV (Jan 1889), 35-56; rpt. *The Writings of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Isobel Murray (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 215-39 (p. 239)). J.A. Symonds, *Essays Speculative and Suggestive*, 2 vols (London: Chapman & Hall, 1890; 3rd edn. London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1907), regards the arts as 'incapable of rivalling reality in its own sphere' (I, 229). The difficult question of artistic competition with life was also addressed in poetry, Robert Browning's 'Fra Lippo Lippi' (1855), in *The Poetical Works of Robert Browning* (London: Oxford University Press, 1905; rpt. 1962), offering, perhaps, one of the best arguments for realism in pictorial - and, by insinuation, literary - art. The Fra has to confront the orthodox beliefs of his social, but not artistic, superiors. It is these procurators of taste who retard progress and 'count it a crime / To let truth slip' (lines 305-6), i.e., a realistic painting of flesh. Arguing his case with the police captain, the Fra anticipates his conventional response:

...Don't object, 'His works
Are here already, nature is complete:
Suppose you reproduce her - (which you can't)
There's no advantage! you must beat her, then.' (lines 306-9)

Stevenson, explaining the disparate obligations of art and life, claims that the former is not expected to present a 'true' simulacrum of the latter, but a 'typical' impression (*HR*, p. 91); in 'this age of the particular', a writer should produce not a detailed copy but 'a simplification of some side or point of life' (*HR*, p. 100).

Stevenson's contribution differed from the many others²⁹ which Besant's controversial initiator occasioned because it understood the fundamental artifice of fiction; it respected fiction's ontological status as an art form. Although Stevenson, like James, envisages art as reflecting the writer's personal selection from the morass of existence, he insists, as James does not, on the need to rearrange these particulars. The inadequacy of the artist's tools dictates that 'he must...suppress much and omit more'; complete inclusion 'is unattainable'.³⁰ James objects: 'rearrangement' produces merely a lifeless 'substitute, a compromise and convention' (*AF*, p. 38). But, Stevenson counters, this is exactly what art is:

Life is monstrous, infinite, illogical...[A] work of art...is neat, finite, self-contained. A proposition of geometry does not compete with life; and a proposition of geometry is a fair and luminous parallel for a work of art; both inhere nature, neither represents it. (*HR*, p. 92)

In attending to the discrepancy, Stevenson approaches the more subversive understanding of 'compete' (which sees art as an alternative to life) that runs throughout 'The Art of Fiction', and so ambiguous is James's position that, in partially capitulating on this point, he exposes the fundamental provisionality of his theory. He states that 'the rule misleads',³¹ acknowledges the intrinsic complexity of aesthetic matters, and concedes that 'to say the object of a novel is to represent life' should admit 'a very free appreciation of such a question...For, after all, may not people differ infinitely as to what constitutes life - what constitutes representation?' (*PP*, p. 228).

The Brother knows that Art was given by God to help our lazy eyes re-see things that we would otherwise ignore or glance over, unseeing; 'And so they are better, painted - better to us, / Which is the same thing' (lines 313-14).

²⁹ Such as Andrew Lang's 'The Art of Fiction', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 39 (April 30, 1884), 1-2. Lang also contributed 'Realism and Romance', *Contemporary Review*, 52 (1887), 683-93 and 'The Science of Criticism', *New Review*, 4 (1891), 403-8, during the debate.

³⁰ Stevenson, 'A Note on Realism', p. 266.

³¹ Henry James, *Partial Portraits* (London: Macmillan, 1888), pp. 257-8. Hereafter cited parenthetically in text as *PP*.

James's argument, despite its inconsistencies, identifies reality as a subjective phenomenon, an individualized experience. Reality is conceived as a personal refraction, an involuntary 'point of view' that can be placed alongside the voluntary 'point of view' assumed by the writer when he represents life, and James distils this formula to such a refined degree in his own novels that they become 'not...my own personal account of the affair in hand, but...my account of somebody's impression of it' (*AN*, p. 327). His most cherished tenet defines the novel as an infinitely flexible form which readily 'lends itself to views innumerable and diverse, to every variety of illustration' (*PP*, p. 163), and while praising the novel as 'The Great Form' in 1889, asserted that

any point of view is interesting that is a direct impression of life. You each have an impression coloured by your individual conditions; make that into a picture, a picture framed by your own personal wisdom.³²

As reality is constructed from multiple 'points of view', the deepest quality of a work of art will always be the quality of the mind of the producer. (*AF*, p. 44).

Presenting the theory was one thing, practising it another. The 'house of Fiction' formalizes the complexity of an expectation already problematized by the unstable and constantly mutable position occupied by the impotent observer, and addresses perhaps the most difficult yet fascinating component of James's doctrine, the moral dimension of the 'point of view'³³ ascribed to a piece of literature:

The house of Fiction has...not one window, but a million...every one of which has been pierced...by the need of the individual vision...[A]t each of them stands a figure with a pair of eyes, or at least a field-glass, which forms, again and again, for observation, a unique instrument, insuring to

³² James, 'The Great Form', in *The House of Fiction*, p. 46.

³³ Starting with James's prefaces and Percy Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1921), continuing through Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), to Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 'point of view' has become central to discussions of narrative form. Norman Freidman, 'Point of View in Fiction: The Development of a Critical Concept', *PMLA* (Dec 1955); rpt. in *The Theory of the Novel*, ed. Philip Stevick (New York: Free Press, 1967), pp. 108-37, summarizes the discussion up to 1955. See also the relevant chapter in his *Form and Meaning in Fiction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1975). James and Lubbock were more concerned with technique; later critics assimilated point of view into more theoretical considerations of genre. Scholes and Kellogg, for example, claim, 'the problem of point of view is narrative art's own problem...In the relationships between the teller and the tale, and that other relationship between the teller and the audience, lie the essence of narrative art' (p. 240). Yet point of view is not sufficient for defining narrative genres, even realistic novels. Franz Stanzel, *Narrative Situations in the Novel*, trans. James Pusak (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971), does attempt, however, to look at the whole narrative 'situation' and acknowledges the 'one central feature of the novel - its mediacy of presentation'. He has 'Second Thoughts on Narrative Situation', *Novel*, 11:3 (Spring 1978), 247-64. See J. Hillis Miller's 'The Narrator as General Consciousness', in *The Form of Victorian Fiction* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), on how Victorian narrators manage to stay 'on both sides of the curtain at once' (pp. 70, 82). Elizabeth Deeds Ermath, *Realism and Consensus in the English Novel* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), offers one of the most incisive, historical explorations of point of view in fiction.

the person making use of it an impression distinct from every other... Tell me what the artist is, and I will tell you of what he has *been* conscious. Therefore I shall express to you at once his boundless freedom and his 'moral' reference.³⁴

The difficulty here lies in the distance, impotency and passivity of the perceiving consciousness or watcher at the window: it is incompatible with the notion of choice, of deliberate selection, that is promoted elsewhere in the passage. This ambivalence may, however, by a purposely insinuated gesture which shows James in the process of exploring the 'positionality' of the observing imagination, the individual's somewhat preordained but potentially liberating uniqueness of perceptual viewpoint,³⁵ it certainly goes some way toward reproducing with graphic precision James's conception of the 'point of view' in fiction.³⁶ As Lubbock explains:

The whole intricate question of method, in the craft of fiction, I take to be governed by the question of point of view - the question of the relation in which the narrator stands to the story. He tells it as he sees it, in the first place; the reader faces the story-teller and listens.³⁷

In true Jamesian fashion, Ermath argues that the term 'point of view' assumes the individualization of the narrative consciousness, and that

it is precisely the narrator's function in the realistic novel to be faceless... The fundamental conventions of realism entail a narrative perspective without local particularity; consequently, to think of this narrator as an individual runs counter to the whole movement of realistic form.³⁸

The praxis of realistic fiction derives from Flaubert's exhortation, 'Soyons exposants et non discutants'. James agrees. A work should show, not tell, extrinsic interpolation and intervention should be minimized, and the aim should be 'to make the presented occasion tell all its story itself' (*AN*, p. 111).

³⁴ Henry James, *The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces*, ed. R.P. Blackmur (New York: Scribner, 1962), pp. 46-7. Hereafter cited parenthetically in the text as *AN*.

³⁵ See Paul Armstrong, *The Phenomenology of Henry James* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), Ch. 1.

³⁶ In complete contrast stands Flaubert's cry for 'impartiality' (*Oeuvres Complètes, Correspondance*, 8 vols (Paris: Louis Conard, 1926-1933), V, 397; rpt. in part in *DMLR*, pp. 89-96 (p. 95). Hereafter cited as *Correspondance*: 'Let us always bear in mind that impersonality is a sign of strength' (*Correspondance*, III, 383; rpt. *DMLR*, p. 93). James pejoratively termed Flaubert's impersonal lack of 'positionality' and self-limitation as the natural consequence of the 'long spasm of his too-fixed attention' (*Essays in London and Elsewhere* (London: Osgood, McIlvaine, 1893), p. 149).

³⁷ Lubbock, *The Craft of Fiction*, p. 251.

³⁸ Ermath, *Realism and Consensus in the English Novel*, p. 39.

Hardy's novels resound to the crashing of these commandments. His consistent presentation of plural, contradictory perspectives and imaginations to convey the relativity of his visioned reality undermines received conventions; that is certain. More enigmatic is why Hardy should want to include the eye of authority in the first place when he is so intent on destroying an absolute perspective. Moving in and out of his fictions at will, Hardy rejects the single, eye-witness account, and dismisses the all-seeing, all-knowing narrator whose 'multiple perceptions...coalesce into a single reality, a single truth'.³⁹ Even the rare occasions which allow the presence of an omniscient eye are undermined by numerous antagonistic eyes, and its authority is jeopardized the moment it is shown to be contrived not given. Berger's comment on Hardy's unorthodox narrative strategy is particularly relevant to the anti-authoritarian position adopted in *Jude the Obscure*:

The very forcefulness of authority's overly simple and unexamined assumption, its arbitrariness, pomposity, and error reveal it to be not absolute and received but personal and subjectively constructed, like every other voice.⁴⁰

Hardy knew that 'the artist cannot avoid modifying his imitation of the chosen object by the infusion of his own subjective quality' (*LN*, II, 1829),⁴¹ and his faith in the writer's 'idiosyncratic mode of regard' (*EL*, p. 294; April 1890), in the supremacy of subjective experiences of reality,⁴² echoes James's. And it is James's repeated references to the 'incalculability of range' and 'choice of subject' (*AN*, pp. 46-7) which alert the controversy to the crucial concept of selection.

³⁹ Scholes and Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative*, p. 273.

⁴⁰ Sheila Berger, *Thomas Hardy and Visual Structures: Framing, Disruption, Process* (London and New York: New York University Press, 1990), p. 108.

⁴¹ Symonds, *Essays Speculative and Suggestive*, I, 199.

⁴² Cp. Wordsworth's explanation in *The Prelude*, in *Wordsworth: Poetical Works*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson (London: Oxford University Press, 2nd edn., 1936; rpt. 1974):

My theme has been
What passed within me. Not of outward things
Done visibly for other minds...
...but of my own heart
Have I been speaking. (Book III, 172-6)

INCLUDING SELECTION

The bits that art (which is 'all discrimination and selection') chooses from life (which is 'all inclusion and confusion' (*AN*, p. 120)) focused French Naturalism. In 1879 Flaubert declared that 'Art is not reality. Whatever else you do, you must choose from the elements which the latter furnishes',⁴³ but his more usual position of 1856 desires 'to get hold of [reality] to the very bottom...- by that I mean minute, meticulous - accepting everything, saying everything, depicting everything - a most ambitious statement'.⁴⁴ Thus whereas orthodox English writers were expected to exercise discretion (Pater announcing 'all art does but consist in the removal of surplusage' (*LN*, II, 1722)⁴⁵), the French, according to Sharp, demonstrated 'the dominant factor in the work of the... realists', a prescriptive 'weakness of the selective faculty',⁴⁶ by admitting anything and everything. It was Flaubert's scrupulous application of his theories which gave Duranty cause to lament the '*excess of study*' in *Madame Bovary*: 'I repeat, always material *description* and never *impression*. It seems to me pointless even to consider the point of view of this book' because there is 'never anything personal'.⁴⁷ In this, Sainte-Beuve, felt, Flaubert 'should not absolutely have gone so far. A book after all is not and could never be reality itself'.⁴⁸

Yet however inclusive the representation, there remains an awareness of the cut-off point, the edge of the canvas which frames James's 'experience concentrated',⁴⁹ and his concession that 'Art is essentially selection' is nevertheless qualified as 'a selection whose main care is to be typical, to be inclusive' (*AF*, p. 38). Besant, stressing the contiguity of 'selection' and 'observation', held that 'the daily life of the world is not dramatic - it is monotonous; the novelist makes it dramatic by his silences, his

⁴³ Flaubert, *Correspondance*, VIII, 224; rpt. *DMLR*, p. 96

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, IV, 125; *DMLR*, p. 94.

⁴⁵ Walter Pater, 'Style', in *Appreciations* (London, 1889), p. 16.

⁴⁶ William Sharp, *The Academy*, XXXVII (1890), 41-2.

⁴⁷ Edmond Duranty and Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, 'Two Views of *Madame Bovary*', rpt. *DMLR*, pp. 97-104. Duranty's view appeared in *Realisme*, No. 5 (March 15, 1857), 79-80; Sainte-Beuve's as '*Madame Bovary* par M. Gustave Flaubert', in *Causeries du Lundi* (May 4, 1857), 346-63 (Paris: Garnier Freres, n.d.). Duranty, *DMLR*, pp. 99, 98.

⁴⁸ Sainte-Beuve, *DMLR*, pp. 101.

⁴⁹ Henry James: *Letters*, ed. Leon Edel, 4 vols (London: Macmillan, 1974, 1978, 1984), II, 11. Hereafter cited as *HJL*. Cp. Hector Agosti, 'know that not all of reality can be expressed' ('A Defence of Realism', in *DMLR*, pp. 489-505 (p. 505)).

suppressions, and his exaggerations'.⁵⁰ In 1855 Henley envisaged the meritorious novel as one which sought 'to eliminate from that gross confusion of actuality...whatever is accidental...irrelevant, and select for perpetuation that only which is appropriate and immortal'.⁵¹ Thirty-three years later found Hardy defining his own literary aesthetic as a quest to 'distinguish truths which are temporary from truths which are eternal, the accidental from the essential' (*PRF*, p. 118), a tenet gleaned from Carlyle's *On Heroes* (1841): 'the gifted man is he who sees the essential point, and leaves all the rest behind as surplusage' (*LN*, I, 1405).⁵² Hardy was still engaged by this issue at the turn of the twentieth century, noting from Stevenson's *Letters* in 1903 that

There is but one art - to omit! O if I knew how to omit, I would ask no other knowledge...Your definition of seeing is quite right. It is the first part of omission to be partly blind. Artistic sight is judicious blindness ...The selective criterion...he learns...in changing, not in copying fact. (*LN*, II, 2208)⁵³

Hardy manipulated the fictional form so as to extrapolate and delineate the 'true feature' from amidst 'much that does not so much appeal, and which you therefore omit to record' (*EL*, p. 241; Dec 1886). Only essential details are combined and recombined to afford 'the best perspective which will get all the relevant details into the picture';⁵⁴ to refute such a hypothesis is little short of denying the possibility of a coherent narrative. Hardy appreciated the inviability of 'reproducing in its entirety the phantasmagoria of experience with infinite and atomic truth, without shadow, relevancy, or subordination' (*PRF*, p. 118), and, frustrated by the uncompromising literalness of the naturalists, took exception to Zola's view that true fiction could never be complete and consistent, and challenged the thesis propounded in *Le Roman Expérimental* (1880).⁵⁵ Hardy is quick to point out that Zola's work betrays a certain obtuseness in its covert granting that 'the

⁵⁰ Besant, *The Art of Fiction*, p. 15.

⁵¹ W.E. Henley, *Athenaeum*, I (1855), 339-40.

⁵² Carlyle, 'The Hero as Poet', in *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, in *Thomas Carlyle's Collected Works*, 31 vols, Library Edition (London: Chapman & Hall, 1869-72), XII, 110.

⁵³ *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, ed. Sidney Colvin (London, 1899), I, 289-90.

⁵⁴ J.P. Stern, *On Realism* (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 73.

⁵⁵ Included in *Emile Zola: Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. Henri Mitterand. 15 vols (Paris: Cercle du Livre Précieux, 1968), X, 1145-1414. Reproduced in part in *DMLR*, pp. 161-96. Eliot and James also saw fiction as a perfect arena for observational experimentation. Eliot describes her works as 'a set of experiments in life' (*The George Eliot Letters*, ed. Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954-78), VI, 216. Hereafter cited as *GEL*); James perceives his as a series of 'experiments in form' (*HJL*, II, 193).

novel should keep as close to reality *as it can*' (*SF*, p. 135). After all, such an admission implies discriminative choice, and once a writer selects or excludes 'with an eye to being more truthful than truth (the just aim of art)' (*SF*, p. 134), he precludes himself from joining the ranks of the purely critical and transforms himself into a creative artist.

Hardy, familiar with the contemporary 'struggle between the critical & the creative faculty' (*LN*, I, 1229),⁵⁶ denounced the former as 'mere copyism', the inferior, unproductive attitude advanced by the 'scientific realists' (*SF*, p. 136). Unlike Zola, Hardy disagreed that 'la formule de la science moderne appliquée à la littérature', and that fiction could depend on the recording of dispassionately observed phenomena. Hardy's polemical essays obliquely contest Flaubert's similar claim that 'Great Art is scientific and impersonal',⁵⁷ and counter the sentiment voiced by Renan in 1858 as to the dependence of literature on science: 'The real world that science reveals to us is by far superior to the fantastic world created by the imagination', the former method supplying 'a poetry which will be reality itself'.⁵⁸ Hardy was adamant: the most profound realistic art was 'based on faithful imagination' and not 'the transcript...of material fact' (*PRF*, p. 116).

Zola declared that 'nous sommes au seuil d'un siècle de science et de réalité',⁵⁹ the creative and intuitive faculties, synonymous with the versified lies of the Romantics, had been superseded by precise scrutiny and exact documentation:

J'insiste sur cette déchéance de l'imagination, parce que j'y vois la caractéristique même du roman moderne... Avec le roman naturaliste, le roman d'observation et d'analyse... tous les efforts de l'écrivain tendent à cacher l'imaginaire sous le réel.⁶⁰

Balzac's 'imagination dereglee qui se jetait dans toutes les exagérations et qui voulait créer le monde à nouveau',⁶¹ irritated Zola, his topical attack on the false inventions of the imagination concluding with a command to believe only in facts, and cultivate 'le sens

⁵⁶ Lange's History of Materialism. - Vol II', *Spectator*, LIV (July 9, 1881), 900.

⁵⁷ Flaubert, *Correspondance*, V, 397; *DMLR*, p. 95.

⁵⁸ Ernest Renan, *Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. Henriette Psichari, 10 vols (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1947-61), III, 804-5.

⁵⁹ Zola, *Mes Haines* (1866), in *Emile Zola: Oeuvres Complètes*, X, 15-187 (p. 27).

⁶⁰ Zola, *Roman Experimental* (1880), in *Oeuvres Complètes*, X, 1145-1414. This passage appears in the chapter headed 'Le Sens du Réel', X, 1285-89 (p. 1285).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, X, 1288. Frédéric Brunetière was also unimpressed: 'Balzac is a dreamer, for whom his visions have more body & substance than the reality itself; or, in other words, for whom reality is only the imperfect translation & symbol of that which he believes himself to see there' (*LN*, I, 1440; 'A propos d'une étude littéraire sur le XIX^e siècle', *Revue des Deux Mondes*, (Dec I, 1886), 703).

du réel'.⁶² This position recalls the ironic Dickensian plea for 'facts' as 'the one thing needful' in the first chapter of *Hard Times* (1854), and anticipates Wilde's denunciation of contemporary literature's 'monstrous worship of facts' in 1889, for 'the moment Art surrenders its imaginative medium it surrenders everything'.⁶³ It was because Zola's doctrine refuted and ignored the primacy of individuality and creativity that it was challenged so ferociously, thus reinforcing Hillebrand's widely-supported arguments.⁶⁴ At about this time Hardy was proposing that the rise of the cult of 'the one thing needful' was symptomatic of the time's intellectual reorientation:

The fallacy appears to owe its origin to the just perception that with our widened knowledge of the universe and its forces and man's position therein, narrative, to be artistically convincing, must adjust itself to the new alignment. (*SF*, p. 135).⁶⁵

Although Hardy praised the impulse, he believed the literary expression of these new perspectives to be misguided: 'Nothing but the illusion of truth can permanently please, and when the old illusions begin to be penetrated a more natural magic has to be applied' (ib.). He activated this revelatory 'magic' by focusing on the poetically-charged transformation of object and incident in fiction, an intensity of insight which approached the contemporary symbolist school headed by Brunetière,⁶⁶ and made clear his dissatisfaction with the reductive consequences concomitant with scientific reality which diminished the greater things in life - the human passions and the poetry of fiction - to arbitrary inconsequence:

What cannot be discerned by eye and ear, and what may be apprehended only by the mental tactility that comes from a sympathetic appreciativeness of life in all its manifestations, this is the gift which renders its possessor a

⁶² Zola, *Oeuvres Complètes*, X, 1286.

⁶³ Wilde, 'The Decay of Lying: An Observation', in *The Writings of Oscar Wilde*, pp. 218, 239.

⁶⁴ Karl Hillebrand, 'About Old and New Novels', *Contemporary Review*, XLV (1884), 391-5, claimed that the Zolaesque school was opposed because it stated art could be created by a scientific approach, and because it refused to acknowledge that personal intuition was the essence of art - the impressionism by which artistic truth was achieved.

⁶⁵ Cp. 'We must somehow achieve a profound readjustment of our general views of the meaning of life & of the structure of the universe' (*LN*, II, 1906; Frederic Myers, 'Modern Poets and the Meaning of Life', *Nineteenth Century*, XXXIII (Jan 1893), 96-101). William R. Rutland's *Thomas Hardy: A Study of His Writings and Their Background* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1938), is not only the first major biography, but offers an invaluable discussion on the intellectual background of the novels and traces Hardy's intellectual development.

⁶⁶ See Dorothy Van Ghent's discussion on the organic correspondence between 'novelistic symbolism' and 'magical strategy': 'magical interpretation and prediction of events consists in seeing one event or thing as a "mimicry" of another.' In imaginative literature, 'mimicry' is 'common to poetry and magic' ('On *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', in *The English Novel: Form and Function* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1953), pp. 193-209 (pp. 207-8); cited in *Thomas Hardy: Critical Assessments*, ed. Graham Clarke, 4 vols (East Sussex: Helm Information, 1993), IV, 113-24 (IV, 122-3). Hereafter cited as *TH:CA*.

more accurate delineator of human nature than many others with twice his powers...of external observation. (*SF*, p. 137)

THE CRITICAL VERSUS THE CREATIVE

Hardy insisted that the ultimate purpose of fiction was not the exact replication of superficialities, but an intensely felt⁶⁷ expression of essentialities:

This reproduction is achieved by seeing into the *heart of a thing*...and is realism, in fact, though being pursued by means of the imagination it is confounded with invention...It is...reached by what M. Arnold calls 'the imaginative reason'. (*EL*, p. 90; Jan 1881)

Hardy's intuitive realism is indebted to an extensive reading of Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*,⁶⁸ and a sympathetic acceptance of the view that true artistry lay in the 'interpretative power' of poetry and the imagination. This 'power', imbibing a passionate Wordsworthian hue, is released so as 'to waken in us a wonderfully full, new & intimate sense of them, [so that] we feel ourselves *to have their secret*' (*LN*, I, 1170);⁶⁹ and the method, invoking a Coleridgean inflection, is designed

to make magically near & real, the life of Nature...The poet is in a great degree passive: he aspires to be a sort of *human Aeolian harp*... 'welcoming every impression without attaching itself to any'. (*LN*, I, 1172)⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Cf. Flaubert: 'The less you feel a thing the more you are likely to express it as it is (as it is always in itself, in its essence, freed of all ephemeral contingent elements). But you have to have the ability to make yourself feel it' (*Correspondance*, II, 461-2; *DMLR*, p. 91; Flaubert's emphasis). Wordsworth's famous definition of poetry as 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling' in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* goes some way to explaining the significance of 'expression' which indicates the root-meaning *ex-pressus*, from *ex-premere*, 'to press out'. In 1801, A.W. Schlegel said that 'the word expression (Ausdruck) is very strikingly chosen for this: the inner is pressed out as though by a force alien to us', and J.S. Mill defined poetry as 'the expression or uttering forth of feeling' ('What Is Poetry?' (1833), in *Early Essays by Stuart John Mill*, ed. J.W.M. Gibbs (London: Bell, 1897), pp. 201-17 (p. 208)). For an interesting discussion on the use Hardy may have made of the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, see James D. Woolf, 'Toward a Definition of Hardy's Poetics', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 17 (1988), 33-43.

⁶⁸ The *First Series* was published in 1865, the *Second Series* in 1888.

⁶⁹ Matthew Arnold, 'Maurice de Guérin', in *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*, ed. R.H. Super, 11 vols (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960-77), III, 12.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, III, 30. Hardy also inherited what Coleridge described as Wordsworth's defects as detailed in his *Biographia Literaria* (1817), ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, vol VII *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn, 16 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), VII: (ii), Ch. XXII, pp. 119-59: 'There is...not seldom, a matter-of-factness in certain poems. This may be divided into, *first*, a laborious minuteness and fidelity in the representation of objects...as they appeared to the poet himself; *secondly*, the insertion of accidental circumstances, in order to the full explanation of his living characters; which circumstances might be necessary to establish the probability of a statement in real life... but appear superfluous in poetry, where the reader is willing to believe for his own sake' (p. 126). For a more detailed discussion of Hardy's figurative employment of the harp, see the analysis of the garden scene in the chapter on *TD*, pp. 233-7.

But Hardy did not subscribe wholesale to the 'wise passiveness' of the mind's eye, and his most poetical perceptions dynamically combine emotions and objects; after Arnold, 'the grand work of [creative] literary genius is a work of synthesis & exposition, not of analysis & discovery' (*LN*, I, 1159).⁷¹

Hardy's belligerence threatened orthodox, fictional precepts, the practitioners of which he felt robbed creative art of its vital significance, while they simultaneously goaded the alternative, aesthetically-minded tradition. He paraded his contempt for the former, who elevated the material above the immaterial, and sneered at the latter, who attended more to method than matter:

There are certain novels...which give convincing proof of much exceptional fidelity, and yet they do not rank as great productions; for what they are faithful in is life garniture and not life...In aiming at the trivial and the ephemeral they have almost surely missed better things. (*PRF*, p. 119)

Hardy accumulates additional weight for his case by citing Taine's dismissal of the superficially-engaged as 'far removed from the great imaginations which create and transform...they narrow themselves to scrupulous exactness...they paint clothes and places with endless detail'. (ib.)⁷² James and Zola are implicitly accused, and, perhaps in response to James's vindictive ebullitions, Hardy distanced himself from the aesthetic drive after formal 'faultlessness'. His note from Comte's *Theory of the Future of Man* (1877), ranking as one of the most persuasive defences of stylistic clumsiness, similarly stands as a prophetic indictment of James's critical and practical arrogance:

The litterateur has only to clothe the thought of others; he may concentrate his faculties therefore on perfecting his language. He naturally is led by this habit to judge too harshly the writer who, compelled to work out new conceptions in the old language, can hardly avoid defects in composition, as he balances between diffuseness and obscurity. (*LN*, I, 1200)⁷³

⁷¹ Arnold, 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time', *Works*, III, 261.

⁷² Negative reactions to the obsession with detail which characterized realistic fiction was as common in France as in England. See *DMLR* for representative arguments, particularly the second section, 'The Battle over Naturalism', pp. 159-425.

⁷³ Auguste Comte, *Theory of the Future of Man*, trans. R. Congreve, vol. 4 of *System of Positive Polity*, trans. E.S. Beesley and R. Congreve, 4 vols (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1874-1877), p. xii.

As early as 1875 Hardy was trying to justify inconsistency in art: "*Ars celare artem*" ...inexact rhymes and rhythms now and then are far more pleasing than correct ones' (*EL*, p. 138; March 1875), but it was not until 1888 that his theory of 'the art of concealing art' (*LY*, p. 184; Jan 1918) found a practical target in James's *Reverberator*:

After this kind of work one feels inclined to be purposely careless in detail. The great novels of the future will certainly not concern themselves with the minutiae of manners...James's subjects are those one could be interested in at moments when there is nothing larger to think of. (*EL*, p. 277; July 1888)⁷⁴

In addition to brushing aside James's method, Hardy defied his matter, that 'importance of exactness - of truth to detail...(solidity of specification)' (*PP*, p. 390), and, in extolling the superior virtues of an intuitive 'sight for the finer qualities of existence' over a clinical, 'eye to the superficial' (*SF*, p. 137), sanctions the Blakean maxim that 'Man's perceptions are not bounded by organs of perception. He perceives more than sense (tho' ever so acute) can discover'.⁷⁵ Single vision, 'that quick, glittering, empirical eye, sharp for the surface of things if for nothing beneath' (*W*, XIV), is the scourge of the experiential methodology practised by the philosophical realists; for them, knowledge of reality is derived exclusively from observed facts. Hardy concedes to the value and significance of objective phenomena, but 'a blindness to material particulars often accompanies a quick perception of the more ethereal characteristics of humanity' (*SF*, p. 137), and attention to perfunctory artefacts is justifiable only if it conduces 'to the elucidation of higher things' (*PRF*, p. 119). Were it not for 'Poetic or Prophetic' perception, 'the Philosophic & Experimental would soon be at the ratio of all things, & stand still, unable to do other than repeat the same dull round over again'.⁷⁶

Hardy distinguished himself by denouncing 'verbatim reporting without selective judgement' (*PRF*, p. 124), and by discrediting the accepted faith in the primacy of the

⁷⁴ The 'larger' originally read 'better' (*PNB*, p. 229). Hardy's rejection of James did seem to soften with time. In 1903 he wrote, 'James is almost the only living novelist I can read, and taken in small does I like him exceedingly' (*One Rare Fair Woman: Thomas Hardy's Letters to Florence Henniker, 1893-1922*, ed. Evelyn Hardy and F.B. Pinion (London: Macmillan, 1972), p. 110). In 1915 he read a review of James and made the following comment: 'It is remarkable that a writer who has no grain of poetry, or humour, or spontaneity in his productions, can yet be a good novelist. Meredith has some poetry, and yet I can read James when I cannot look at Meredith' (*LY*, pp. 168-9; May 1915). See J.T. Laird, 'Approaches to Fiction: Hardy and Henry James', *Thomas Hardy Annual: No. 2*, ed. Norman Page (London: Macmillan, 1984), 41-60.

⁷⁵ W. Blake, 'There Is No Natural Religion' (1788), in *The Complete Writings of William Blake, with Variant Readings*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), [b], I, .

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Conclusion.

object, his note that 'the material is not the real - only the visible, the real being invisible optically' (*EL*, p. 243; Feb 1887), repeating Carlyle's notion that 'it is only the invisible that really is'.⁷⁷ His consistent recalcitrance registers a crucial redistribution of emphasis and relocates 'real reality' in the subjective; after all, 'the world is only a psychological phenomenon' (*TD*, XIII), as Leopardi testifies,⁷⁸ and 'the poetry of a scene varies with the minds of the perceivers. Indeed, it does not lie in the scene at all' (*EL*, p. 66; Aug 1865). In Hardy's partly real, partly dream country,⁷⁹ it is the inner eye that produces the ultimate vision of reality; ontology and meaning is in the seeing of the seer, not the scene. The gauntlet was thrown at George Eliot.

Though both drew from the same vein of great thinkers, Eliot and Hardy reacted differently, their antagonistic attitude toward the fusion of mind and matter marking a productive stage in the evolution of the novel. Eliot's theory of fictional realism respects the autonomy and intractability of physical things, and allows that their existence is independent of the perceiving mind and prior to the literary text; the abstract originates in the concrete. But her realistic doctrine entails perceiving reality in a number of mutually-exclusive ways. That cited above is most consistent with her theoretical position, but her second proviso, corresponding more with her practice, approaches Hardy's stance and understands reality as a creative, emotional precipitate of the perceiving consciousness. Yet whereas Eliot regards both this process and its product as an inferior, distorted truth, Hardy believes it to yield the essential reality of things. Eliot's third alternative, virtually analogous with Hardy's, sees reality as a spiritualized activity which cannot be comprehended in such crude terms as objective and subjective for, by its nature, it transcends both. This rarest and most refined reality ushers in the idealist's faith in the pre-eminence of the writer's internal condition; Eliot's faith in 'the truth of [her] own mental state' (*E*, p. 367) is Hardy's loyalty to his 'idiosyncratic mode of regard' (*EL*, p. 294; April 1890); Eliot's belief that 'it is a narrow mind which cannot look at a subject from various points of view'⁸⁰ is Hardy's kaleidoscopic eye.

⁷⁷ *Last Words of Thomas Carlyle* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1892), p. 36.

⁷⁸ Seep. 215 and n. 64 in the chapter on *TD* for a fuller discussion of this point.

⁷⁹ 'Wessex: for so, with characteristic love of reality, he calls the land of his inventions; by no imaginary name' is called the country 'where the people of his imagination live' (Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, p. 83).

⁸⁰ George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (1872), ed. W.W. Harvey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), Ch. 7. Hereafter cited parenthetically in

Hardy and Eliot inherited a rich tradition and with it the ever present anxiety of influence. Eliot, like Hardy, confessed herself affected by the teachings of Carlyle and Ruskin, and though the extent to which G.H. Lewes shaped her theories is more contentious,⁸¹ it is credible that Eliot's confidence in her 'own mental state' is predicated upon Lewes's defensive definition of realism as fidelity to each artist's personal perceptions:

A distinction is drawn between Art and Reality, and an antithesis established between Realism and Idealism, which would never have gained acceptance had not men in general lost sight of the fact that Art is a Representation of Reality.⁸²

Though realism at this time was described in all manner of reductive and simplistic terms - as a 'copy', 'transcript' or 'daguerreotype'⁸³ - Lewes refused to side-step the complexity surrounding the term's ontological status:

A Representation...must necessarily be limited by the nature of its medium... but while thus limited...Art always aims at the expression of Reality, i.e. of Truth...Realism is thus the basis of all Art, and its antithesis is not Idealism, but *Falsism*.⁸⁴

How the fictional Representation relates to the Reality it reproduces is problematical, as Lewes testifies, but even such epistemological confusions are not sufficient to dissuade him from his faith in his representational theory.

Even so, Lewes felt obliged to qualify his position. In 'The Principles of Success in Literature' (1865), he warns against the frequent confusion of 'detailism' and 'realism', and advises that 'there are other truths besides coats and waistcoats, pots and pans'.⁸⁵ In Goethe, Lewes found a perfect model - his 'art is truth' - and exclaimed that 'the beauty

text as *M*.

⁸¹ Accounts of the criticism of Lewes and Eliot are found in Richard Stang, *The Theory of the Novel in England 1850-1870* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), who discusses both separately. Gordon S. Haight, 'George Eliot's Theory of Fiction', *Victorian Newsletter*, 10 (1956), 1-3, asserts their intellectual independence of one another. See also Morris Greenhut, 'George Henry Lewes as a Critic of the Novel', *Studies in Philology*, 45 (1948), 491-511; G.H. Lewes, *Literary Criticism of George Henry Lewes*, ed. Alice R. Kaminsky (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964); Alice R. Kaminsky, *George Henry Lewes as a Critic* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1968), and 'George Eliot, George Henry Lewes, and the Novel', *PMLA*, 70 (1955), 997-1013.

⁸² G.H. Lewes, 'Realism in Art: Recent German Fiction', *Westminster Review*, XIII, n.s. (Oct 1858), 488-518 (p. 493).

⁸³ See Stang, *The Theory of the Novel in England 1850-1870*, p. 149.

⁸⁴ Lewes, 'Realism in Art', p. 493. Cp. Eliot's famous fear of 'falsity': 'falsehood is so easy, truth so difficult' (*AB*, Ch 17). She abjures deliberate disingenuousness when it comes to the moral awakening of the Self to the Other: 'Falsification here is far more pernicious than in the more artificial aspects of life' (*Essays of George Eliot*, ed. Thomas Pinney (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), p. 270). Hereafter cited parenthetically in text as *E*.

⁸⁵ G.H. Lewes, 'The Principles of Success in Literature', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 (1865), 85-95, 'The Principle of Vision': 185-96, 'Of Vision in Art': 572-89, 697-709; 2 (1865), 257-68, 689-710 (1, pp. 583, 588, 589).

and art of *Werther* is not in the incidents but in the representation. What is Art but Representation?⁸⁶ Most salient is his barely concealed relief at there being 'scarcely any extraneous imagery...Goethe seldom tells you what an object is *like*, he tells you what it *is*',⁸⁷ and he continues by crediting Goethe's 'strong feeling for the real, the concrete, the living', and applauding his conscientious effort to examine nature 'so as to see her *directly*, and not through the mists of fancy, or through the distortions of prejudice, - to look at men, and *into* them, - to apprehend things as they are'.⁸⁸ Though sensible of the difficulties accompanying perception and realism, Lewes believed that a true master could render an artistic vision with scientific precision.

The command to see directly, the superior tone, the phraseology and ideology, seem to have provided Eliot with the basic criteria for her response to Ruskin,⁸⁹ her endorsement of *Modern Painters* proscribing a repetition of the uncompromising programmatic realism followed in *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1858).⁹⁰ Her review of Volume III in 1856 expands Ruskin's logical formulation of the 'truth respecting art' as it appears in the Preface, and clarifies his somewhat convoluted argument:

The truth of infinite value that he teaches is *realism* - the doctrine that all truth and beauty are to be attained by a humble and faithful study of nature, and not by substituting vague forms, bred by imagination on the mists of feeling, in place of definite substantial reality. The thorough acceptance of this doctrine would remould our lives.⁹¹

Eliot concurs with Ruskin - as Lewes did with Goethe - on the fundamentality of a 'faithful study of nature...which concerns itself simply with things as they ARE' (*Works*, V, 111).⁹² Ruskin is not denying the power of the imagination but confronting its misuse and perversion by the emotions, the profligate indulgence of feeling at the expense of fact

⁸⁶ Lewes, *The Life and Works of Goethe* (1855; London: Dent, 1908), III, 154.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 53. Cp. Eliot: 'Intelligence so rarely shows itself in speech without metaphor - that we can so seldom declare what a thing is, except by saying that it is something else' (*The Mill on the Floss* (1860), ed. A.S. Byatt (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1979), II.1).

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ See Darrel Mansell, 'Ruskin and George Eliot's Realism', *Criticism*, 7 (1965), 203-16. Mansell argues that neither Eliot nor Ruskin advocated 'exact imitation of nature'. Eliot's metaphor of the artist as an optical instrument is part of an aesthetic theory in which the structure of the novel can be dictated by the process of the author's memory.

⁹⁰ See David Lodge's Introduction to *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1858) (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), pp. 7-32 (p. 18).

⁹¹ G. Eliot, 'Art and Belles Lettres', *Westminster Review*, 65 (April 1856), 625-50 (p. 626).

⁹² Cp. Aristotle, *The Art of Poetry*, trans. Ingram Bywater, ed. W. Hamilton Fyfe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940): 'The poet being an imitator just like the painter or other maker of likenesses, he must necessarily in all instances represent things in one or other of three aspects, either as they were or are, or as they are said or thought to be or have been, or as they ought to be' (Ch. 25, pp. 70-8 (p. 72)).

even in 'the most inspired prophet...[being] a sign of the incapacity of his human sight or thought to bear what has been revealed to it' (*Works*, V, 218).⁹³ In like kind, though Eliot refutes the importance of 'vague forms' and disparages creations fuelled by insubstantial 'mists of feeling', she is not petitioning for the thoughtless, unsympathetic documentation of material facts. And Ruskin, far from praising superficial mimeticism, expects an artistic transformation wrought by imaginative mediation to succeed close study of natural objects:

The pursuit of idealism in humanity...can be successful only when followed through the most constant, patient and humble rendering of actual models, accompanied by that earnest mental⁹⁴ study of each, which can interpret all that is written upon it. (*Works*, IV, 187)

Ruskin's Idealism, his insistence on the immanence of the ideal within the real, pointed the way to reproducing the substantial fact while investing it with emotional and moral depth, and became the Realism of the later Victorian novelists. Hardy was particularly attracted to Ruskin's famous chapter on the pathetic fallacy which introduces 'two of the most objectionable words that were ever conceived by the troublesomeness of metaphysicians, - namely, "Objective," and "Subjective"' (*Works*, V, 201),⁹⁵ and examines the empiricists' description of the word 'blue' as

the sensation of colour which the human eye receives in looking at the open sky...[T]he thing, when it is not looked at, is not blue...[T]he qualities of things...depend upon our perception of them...[I]t does not much matter what things are in themselves, but only what they are to us. (*Works*, V, 201-2)⁹⁶

⁹³ More recent studies discuss how far response-dependent concepts compromise realism. See Charles P.C. Pettit, 'Realism and Response-Dependence', *Mind*, 100 (Oct 1991), 586-626.

⁹⁴ The first edition reads 'mental as well as ocular'.

⁹⁵ De Quincey was mistaken in seeing the 'metaphysical word "objective"' as 'nearly unintelligible in 1821' ('Confessions of an English Opium Eater', *Works*, III, 440 n.1) and Coleridge's use of the terms 'objective' and 'subjective' in Ch. X of *Biographia Literaria* (1817) as totally new. By 1817, as far as the Kantian implications were concerned, the terms had reverted their earlier meanings. When introduced by Duns Scotus (c. 1265-c. 1308), *subjectivum* was the actual object of thought, and *objectivum* 'the thing as constituted through the perceiving mind'. The reversal ended in England in the eighteenth century, so by 1725 Isaac Watts (1674-1748) defines the 'objective' as 'true in itself, and 'subjective' as our reaction: 'The one is in things, the other in our minds' (*Logick*, 8th edn. (1745), II, 150). The definition as it appears in *Biographia Literaria* whereby (chiasmically) the 'objective and subjective...distinguish the *percipere* from the *percipi*' (Ch. X) was almost a century old.

⁹⁶ See Hylas's and Philonous's discussion on the essential nature of colour in George Berkeley's *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous* (1713), ed. Robert Merrihew Adams (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1979), pp. 19-20. See D.M. Armstrong, *Berkeley's Theory of Vision* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1960).

Continuing his spirited attack on 'egotism' and 'selfishness', Ruskin mocks the belief in the principal status of the perceiver:

a philosopher may easily go so far as to believe, and say, that everything in the world depends upon his seeing or thinking of it, and that nothing, therefore, exists but what he sees or thinks it. (*Works*, V, 202)⁹⁷

Ruskin marshals a convincing case for the autonomy of material objects and, like Eliot, challenges the view that seeks to dissolve phenomenal reality through imaginative art. Hardy, on the other hand, is not bothered about preserving the integrity of 'external things'. Ruskin endeavours to persuade us out of a belief in a closed world of sense impressions; Hardy endeavours to persuade us into that belief.

Hardy familiarized himself with *Modern Painters* as early as 1862 (*EL*, p. 50; Aug 1862), but did not begin recording his discoveries until the mid 1880s.⁹⁸ Such citations reveal that what reigned supreme for both artists was the reinterpretation of externals by the 'imagination penetrative' (*Works*, IV, 250), a faculty which 'is concerned, not with the combining, but the apprehending of things' (*Works*, IV, 249); it refrains from depicting materials in a strictly literal sense, and

seizes always by the inner most point...It never stops at crusts...or outward images of any kind...[I]t plunges into the very central fiery heart ...[I]t describes not by outward features; all that it affirms, judges, or describes, it affirms, from within. (*Works*, IV, 250-1)

How different from Eliot's reading and assimilation of Ruskin is Hardy's; to him the 'infinite value' resides in the declaration that

the power of every picture depends on the penetration of the imagination into the *TRUE* nature of the thing represented, and on the utter scorn of the imagination for all shackles...of mere external fact that stand in the way of its suggestiveness. (*Works*, IV, 278)

⁹⁷ Cp. Berkeley's 'this world I perceive is my perceptions, & nothing more' (*LVN*, I, 1215; W.H. Mallock, 'The Late Professor Clifford's Essays', *Edinburgh Review*, CLI (April 1880), 474-511 (p. 491)). For a fuller discussion, see Robert Hewison, *John Ruskin: The Argument of the Eye* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

⁹⁸ See *LVN*, II, 1376, 1377, 1381, 1382, 2199.

As discoveries are implicit in premises, Eliot and Hardy each found in Ruskin the evidence they desired, yet what frames Eliot's aesthetic, but neither Hardy's nor Ruskin's, is a respectful deference before the matter of the physical world, an unbending loyalty to 'the religion which keeps an open ear and an obedient mind to the teachings of fact' (*E*, p. 429).

Hardy's desire 'to see the deeper reality underlying the scenic, the expression of what are sometimes called abstract imaginings' (*EL*, p. 242; Jan 1887),⁹⁹ owes as much to Ruskin as to Carlyle's directive to 'penetrate through obscurity to seize the characteristic feature of an object' (*LN*, I, 1406),¹⁰⁰ a stance which aligned him more closely with his French counterparts than his fellow countrymen. In 1887, de Maupassant stated that 'la réalité n'a qu'une valeur subjective', and Proust later claimed that 'dans l'art il n'a que de vérité que subjective'.¹⁰¹ Though Johnson found it difficult 'to express that singular quality of Mr Hardy's writing...by virtue of which the reader sees the very landscape in its exact truth',¹⁰² Hardy defined both the 'quality' and its means of expression:

The exact truth as to material fact ceases to be of importance in art - it is a student's style - the style of a period when the mind...does not bring anything to the object that coalesces with and translates the qualities that are already there, - half hidden, it may be - and the two united are depicted as the All. (*EL*, pp. 242-3; Jan 1887)

It is tempting to see behind this creative interaction with a latent property the hint of an ultimate reality, and, as Lewes declared and Hardy noted, 'My world may be my picture of it; *your* world may be your picture of it; but there is something common to both which is more than either'.¹⁰³ The perceiving mind is an independent, primary reality of its own and, as the pervasive web images supplied by Carlyle, Arnold, Pater, Eliot, Ruskin and Hardy show,¹⁰⁴ there exists a universal connection which stimulates individual subjectives with similar impressions; an imagistic, monistic design correlates

⁹⁹ Cp. Stevenson: the writer must half shut 'his eyes against the dazzle and confusion of reality' and regard only 'a certain fragmentary abstraction' (*HR*, p. 91). Hector Agosti, 'A Defence of Realism', *DMLR*, pp. 489-505, also appreciates that 'realism...does turn towards abstraction in its primordial method in order to get hold of reality' (p. 501).

¹⁰⁰ Carlyle, *The Life of Friedrich Schiller*, in *Works*, V, 37.

¹⁰¹ Cited by Albert J. Salvan, 'L'Essence du Réalisme Français', *Comparative Literature*, III:3 (1951), 222-33 (pp. 229, 231).

¹⁰² Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, p. 114.

¹⁰³ G.H. Lewes, 'The Course of Modern Thought', *Fortnightly Review*, XXVII (1877), 317-27 (p. 321).

¹⁰⁴ See n. 86 in *W* chapter.

mind and matter, subjective and objective reality. Each external phenomenon has a mental equivalent. One mirrors the other.

THE MIRROR, THE WINDOW AND THE SLIDE

Reaching this universal relation requires seeing with Professor Teufelsdröckh's 'philosophic eye'¹⁰⁵ which, working on the premise that 'all objects are as windows', can access a more exquisite reality. In 1910, Gay considered, and Hardy cited, Professor James's invitation to 'think of our brains as thin & transparent places in this material veil [the whole universe of material things], permitting the Infinite Thought to pierce them as white light pierces glass' (*LN*, II, 2462).¹⁰⁶ But most interesting is the qualification that 'if the glass be stained or blurred the light itself will be distorted; hence the strange imperfections with which we are familiar in ourselves & our fellow-creatures' (*ib.*). It repeats the multi-windowed Jamesian 'house of Fiction', reflects Eliot's anxiety over the perversion of facts concomitant with representations issuing from 'my mind' (*AB*, Ch. 17), and re-introduces that other ubiquitous reflective metaphor, the mirror.¹⁰⁷ Art's traditional role of holding a mirror up to Nature,¹⁰⁸ though Platonic in origin, enjoyed constant revision and attention, both antipathetic and sympathetic.¹⁰⁹ 'Un roman est un miroir,' declared Salvan, and suggested that a writer's genius 'consisterait à faire de son livre un miroir de la vie';¹¹⁰ 'Let us be magnifying mirrors of external truth,' urged

¹⁰⁵ Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, I. XI.

¹⁰⁶ Florence Gay, 'The New Evolution', *Outlook*, 25 (May 14, 1910), 715.

¹⁰⁷ As a literary term, 'mirror' is based on the Medieval Latin use of the word *speculum* (as in Vincent de Beauvais' *Speculum Naturale, Historiale, Doctrinale* (c. 1250), or John Gower's *Speculum Meditantis* (c. 1376-8) which was translated into French as *Mirour de L'Homme*) to mean a true reflection or description of a particular subject. The fifteenth century produced such titles as Nicholas Love's *Mirroure of the Blessed Lyf of Iesu Christ*, William Caxton's translation, from the French, of the *Mirroure of the World*, and a translation of Nigel Wireker's *Speculum Stultorum*. The mirror image was especially prevalent in descriptions of comedies, the forerunners of literary realism. Cicero defined comedy as 'a copy of life, a mirror of custom', Ben Jonson, following Cicero, uses *Cordatus* as a mouthpiece: comedy is an 'imitatio vitae, speculum consuetudinis, imago veritatis' (*Every Man out of His Humour*, III, VI, 201ff).

¹⁰⁸ See Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979). Cp. Wordsworth: 'Poetry is the most philosophic writing of all...its object is truth...[T]he Poet...considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature' ('Preface to Lyrical Ballads' (1805), in *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. Michael Mason (London and New York: Longman, 1992), pp. 55-87; Appendix, pp. 87-93, (pp. 73, 76)).

¹⁰⁹ Hardy's use of the mirror and window seems to express the concepts of delusion and immature vision respectively. Literary tradition has long associated mirrors with vanity and illusion, and the opposition of the real and the artificial, but it was in the nineteenth century that windows came under suspicion. Hardy is one among a number of novelists who perceived that one's subjective window on the world could generate a distorted view. For an exposition of the significant use of window and mirror figures in the novels of the Brontës and George Eliot, see Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).

¹¹⁰ Salvan, 'L'Essence du Réalisme Français', pp. 232, 222-3.

Flaubert.¹¹¹ But Gosse appreciated the limits of reflective realism in 'the inherent disproportion which exists between the small flat surface of the book and the vast arch of life which it undertakes to mirror',¹¹² and in 1913/14, the painter De Casseres ridiculed the insufficiency of the traditional prescription:

*There is no such thing in art as nature, nor is there a mirror in the human mind. There are nothing but illusion, deformation and bias. Art is the record of a temperament... And the 'mirror' that we are told to hold up to 'nature' is a hurrying torrent of feeling and thought (LN, II, 2421)*¹¹³

The most important development occurred in 1864 with Zola's contrivance of the reductive dimension of the realistic method in 'les trois écrans'. This triple-screen paradigm approximates James's million windows in that it addresses multiple points of view and accommodates multiple variations on reality, but, unlike James, Zola justifies a preferred position: 'toutes mes sympathies...sont pour l'Écran réaliste'. Whereas the classic screen is enlarging and the romantic distorting, the realistic encourages a clear, unimpeded view:

*L'Écran réaliste est un simple verre à vitre, très mince, très clair, et qui à la prétention d'être si parfaitement transparent que les images le traversent et se reproduisent ensuite dans leur réalité.*¹¹⁴

Zola's concession to the flaw in the glass, its inevitable, unfortunate and irremediable distortions, opened up what would become a major topic of the Great Debate.

George Eliot, seeing the reality and veracity of the literary reflection as hinging on the objective performance of the neo-classical mirror, subscribes to Wordsworth's ideal, that

*ability to observe with accuracy things as they are in themselves, and with fidelity to describe them, unmodified by any passion or feeling existing in the mind of the describer...[I]ts exercise supposes all the higher qualities of the mind to be passive, and in a state of subjection to external objects.*¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Flaubert, *Correspondance*, III, 384; *DMLR*, p. 94.

¹¹² Edmund Gosse, 'The Limits of Realism in Fiction', *Forum*, 9 (1890), 391-400; rpt. *DMLR*, pp. 383-393 (p. 390).

¹¹³ Unidentified magazine cutting.

¹¹⁴ Cited by Damian Grant, *Realism* (London and New York: Methuen, 1970), p. 28.

¹¹⁵ Preface to *Poems* (1815), in *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism*, ed. Nowell C. Smith (1905; rpt. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1980), p. 150.

Eliot argues for reality's ontological priority in both her novels - 'My strongest effort is... to give a faithful account of men and things as they have mirrored themselves in my mind' (*AB*, Ch. 17)¹¹⁶ - and letters: 'I only try to exhibit some things as they have been or are, seen through such a medium as my own nature gives me'.¹¹⁷ But it is in 'my mind' that the problem lies; the ego perverts rather than protects the autonomy of facts: 'The mirror is doubtless defective; the outlines will sometimes be disturbed, the reflection faint or confused' (*AB*, Ch. 17),¹¹⁸ and is thus forced to perpetrate the cardinal sin: falsism.¹¹⁹

This 'mirror' passage, potentially one of the most important statements on the conception and execution of her art, reappears over a decade later in *Middlemarch* (1872):

Your pier-glass...will be minutely and multitudinously scratched in all directions; but place now against it a lighted candle as a centre of illumination, and lo! the scratches will seem to arrange themselves in a fine series of concentric circles round that little sun...These things are a parable. The scratches are events, and the candle is the egoism of any person now absent. (*M*, Ch. 27)

Reality may exist *a priori*, anterior to the narrative in which it is reproduced, but the world of facts ('scratches') is 'disturbed' (re-arranged) by the imperfect medium through which it must pass. The dislocating factor is the ego (the candle) which glorifies the Self¹²⁰ as the locus of the (not a) universe, and is oblivious to the existence of other individuals' 'equivalent centre of self' (*M*, Ch. 21). Indeed, Dorothea is initially guilty of 'seeing reflected' in Casaubon's mind only those 'qualit[ies] she herself brought' (*M*, Ch.

¹¹⁶ As far as criticism goes she was successful; James found Dinah bearing numerous indications of being 'a reflection of facts well known to the author' (Henry James, 'The Novels of George Eliot', *Atlantic Monthly*, 18 (Oct 1866), 479-492, rpt. *A Century of George Eliot Criticism*, ed. Gordon S. Haight (London: Methuen & Co., 1966), pp. 43-54 (p. 49)).

¹¹⁷ *GEL*, II, 362. If such individualism is taken to extremes, then it is no surprise to find T.S. Eliot accusing George Eliot of trying to 'impress upon readers her own personal view of life' (Eliot's emphasis; *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Heresy* (London: Faber, 1934), p. 53). Acceptance of T.S. Eliot's charge certainly problematizes any discussion of Eliot's attack on egoism or 'moral stupidity' (*Middlemarch*, ed. W.J. Harvey (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), Ch. 21; hereafter cited parenthetically in text as *M*), that lack of sympathy for the otherness of others.

¹¹⁸ Shelley implies that prose-writing itself is the perpetrator of the distortion: 'A story of particular facts is as a mirror which obscures and distorts that which should be beautiful: poetry is a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted' ('A Defence of Poetry', in *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. Donald H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers (New York: Norton, 1977), pp. 478-508 (p. 485).

¹¹⁹ James found Balzac's view to proceed from 'the very complexion of the mirror in which the [subject] material is reflected' (*The Question of our Speech [and] the Lesson of Balzac* (Boston, Mass; and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1905), p. 80). His assessment of Trollope's mimetic accuracy is also affiliated with the quality of the writer's mind: 'He repeats in literature the image projected by life upon his moral consciousness. The lines are somewhat blurred by being thus reproduced, and the colours somewhat deadened; they have nothing of ideal perfection or radiance; but they are true; human nature recognizes itself' (review of *Linda Tressel*, in *The Nation* (June 18, 1868), p. 494). It echoes Oscar Wilde's sentiment that 'it is the spectator, not life, that art really mirrors'.

¹²⁰ See Richard Freadman, *Eliot, James and the Fictional Self: A Study in Character and Narration* (London: Macmillan, 1986), espec. pp. 10-16, 'The Self: Essence and Culture' and 'Social Fictions: The Self and Narrative Intelligibility'. Eliot's castigation of Dorothea is akin to Keats's (disparaging) reference to Wordsworth's 'egotistical sublime'. Wordsworth acknowledges that 'Points have we all of us within our souls / Where all stand single' (*The Prelude*, Book III, 185-6), but it is upon his own 'point', not others', that he focuses.

3) and her perceptual development is traced throughout the correction of this state of 'moral stupidity' (*M*, Ch. 21). Egocentricity, though it precludes sympathetic access to other states of consciousness, ratifies the ultimate ambition of the sincere writer who 'never breaks loose from his criterion - the truth of his own mental state' (*E*, p. 367).

If all experience, all reality, is the creation of the perceiver, then there is a self-perpetuating, infinite reflection of ourselves in a vast universe of mirrors, a disturbing notion, and one which the title poem of Hardy's *Moments of Vision* (1917) explores. 'That mirror' performs a spectrum of visual duties: it 'makes of men a transparency', enforces 'a breast-bare spectacle' of things, 'penetrates like a dart', and catches/glasses our 'last thoughts'. The interrogatives, though remorseless, are as indeterminate and as elusive as the response they hope to receive, and the focal terms, 'transparency', 'spectacle' and 'penetrates', derive from the 'key-scene to the whole' of *The Dynasts* in a spectacular 'moment of vision':

A new and penetrating light descends on the spectacle, enduing men and things with a seeming transparency, and exhibiting as one organism the anatomy of life and movement in all humanity and vitalized matter included in the display. (*D*, 1, Fore Scene)

As reality shifts over an active surface, Napoleon moves 'like a figure on a lanternslide' in a 'phantasmagoric show' (*D*, 1. IV. v),¹²¹ and his enemies dissolve 'like the diorama of a dream' (*D*, 2. I. vii).¹²² This, and Hardy's reference to 'the phantasmagoria of experience' (*PRF*, p. 118), utilizes the meaning assigned to the term coined in 1802 by Philipsthal who 'exhibited on a transparent screen at the Lyceum representations "in a dark scene" of apparitions and spectres which appeared to advance or recede...by means of lenses and concave reflectors'.¹²³ Our 'phantasmagory of a world' (*LN*, '1867', entry 85)¹²⁴ is all a series of optical illusions.

¹²¹ For a fuller discussion of Hardy's use of the magic-lantern, see the chapter on *JO*, pp. 261-4.

¹²² For a brief explanation of 'the Diorama' as given by Professor Wheatstone in 1838, see Alexander Bain, 'Sense of Sight', in *The Senses and the Intellect* (1855; London: Longmans, Green & Co., 4th edn., 1894), pp. 222-59: 'pictorial representations of distant objects, when those circumstances which would prevent or disturb the illusion are carefully excluded, may be rendered such perfect resemblances of the objects they are intended to represent, as to be mistaken for them' (p. 242). See also George Eliot's allusion in *Adam Bede*: haste and exertion 'leave our thoughts very much at the mercy of our feelings and imagination; and it was so to-night with Adam. While his muscles were working lustily, his mind seemed as passive as a spectator at a diorama: scenes of the sad past, and probably sad future, floating before him, and giving place one to the other in swift succession' (*AB*, Ch. 4).

¹²³ E.H. Gombrich, *Meditations on a HobbyHorse and other Essays on the Theory of Art* (1963; 2nd edn, London: Phaidon, 1971), p. 121. The most direct presentation of this effect in the novels is that of Eustacia appearing 'for an instant as distinct as a figure in a

'Moments of Vision' presumes the poet to hold the mirror aloft; *The Dynasts* counteracts any such existential implication of free will, and insinuates instead that the visions reflected are merely dictated by the perceiver's memories, are automatic, predetermined responses, the result of Hobbes's '*decaying sense*', that is, '*imagination*', which, having become 'old, and past...is called *memory*'.¹²⁵ Indeed, Bailey says that the third verse 'seems to symbolize memory, introspection, and conscience penetrating the gloss of self-justification and revealing the "tincts" (stains) of the soul'.¹²⁶ Hardy's essential inquisition certainly addresses 'The visioning powers of souls who dare / To pierce the material screen' (*CP*, 413) in a manner reminiscence of Browning's poem on Smart:

'Smart, solely of such songmen, pierced the screen
'Twixt thing and word, lit language straight from soul,-'

By this stage objectivity is impossible; too much is given over to self-expression, to exposition as opposed to exhibition, to telling rather than showing. The picture seen through the window, in the mirror and on the slide is no longer really "real".

phantasmagoria - a creature of light surrounded by an area of darkness' (*RN*, 5.VII). Hardy's interest in phantasmagoria as both reverie and history originates in his reading of Carlyle's *The French Revolution* (1837) which is continued in *The Dynasts*. Carlyle's phantasmagoria stems, in its turn, from his study of German romanticism, a 'literary generation' which saw 'life as a dream, miracle, theatre' (Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels, Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background 1760-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 74). According to Kevin Z. Moore, *The Descent of the Imagination: Postromantic Culture in the Later Novels of Thomas Hardy* (London and New York: University of New York Press, 1990), 'in Hardy's writing, the phantasmagoria always depicts the condition of men and women confined to the "real" irreality of an existence characterized as a "psychological phenomenon"' (p. 294 n. 4). See Terry Castle, 'Phantasmagoria: Spectral Technology and the Metaphorics of Modern Reverie', *Critical Enquiry*, 15:1 (Autumn 1988), 26-61, for a critical and historical discussion of the term which is relevant to Hardy. Zola also refers to what he calls 'la fantasmagorie de Balzac' (*Oeuvres Complètes*, X, 1288).

¹²⁴ Thomas Carlyle, 'Death of Edward Irving', *Works*, IX, 394. See Susan Dean, *Hardy's Poetic Vision in 'The Dynasts'* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 44, for a full discussion on this subjective 'diorama'; Joan Grundy, *Hardy and the Sister Arts*, esp. pp. 117-25, for an exploration of the 'cinematic' visual method of the work; Tom Paulin, *Thomas Hardy: The Poetry of Perception* (London: Macmillan; Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1975); John Wain, Introduction to *The Dynasts* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1979), pp. ix-xiv; David Lodge, 'Thomas Hardy as a Cinematic Novelist', in *Thomas Hardy After Fifty Years*, ed. Lance St John Butler (London: Macmillan, 1977), pp. 78-89; rpt. *Working with Structuralism: Essays and Reviews on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Literature*, ed. David Lodge (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 95-105.

¹²⁵ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, or the Matter, Form and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical*, ed. Michael Oakeshott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 10. Recent research on consciousness is focusing on how the brain handles visual information and its relationship with memory. See Steve Connor, 'Why Seeing is Believing', *Independent on Sunday* (June 4, 1995), 58-9. See also Alan Shelston, 'Thomas Hardy and the Literature of Memory', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XII:3 (Oct. 1996), 45-56.

¹²⁶ J.O. Bailey, *The Poetry of Thomas Hardy: A Handbook and Commentary* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970). This is highly suggestive of the 'the thousand sordid images / Of which your soul is constituted' in T.S. Eliot's 'Preludes', in *T.S. Eliot: Selected Poems* (London: Faber & Faber, 1961), III, 4-5; there, too, the visions 'flickered against the ceiling' (III, 6) in a variation which pays tribute to impressionistic projection, and Bergson's and Schopenhauer's 'magic lantern'.

THE PERSONALIZED PICTURE

Like the mirror/window figure, 'the pictorial metaphor seems omnipresent in Victorian criticism of fiction'.¹²⁷ According to James, 'the analogy between the art of the painter and the art of the novelist is complete' (*AF*, p. 25), and it is hard 'to draw a hard and fast line on the border-land of explanation and illustration' (*PP*, p. 256).¹²⁸ For Grundy too, 'the lines of demarcation between *genre* painting and narrative painting in the Victorian period are sometimes difficult to draw',¹²⁹ and 'Hardy in his novels is a painter using words as his medium instead of paint'.¹³⁰ Hardy, however, took violent exception to the accusation of 'word-painting...I never try to do it; all I endeavour is to give an *impression* of a scene as it strikes me',¹³¹ an affronted response to a contemporary commendation of his 'excellent word-painting of Nature'.¹³²

The reason behind this association is intriguing. Page suggests that 'in mid-nineteenth-century England, the arts of prose fiction and painting entered into a relationship of common purpose...to represent with scrupulous attention to detail the surface of life',¹³³ but this objectivism soon came under attack, and Lang, arguing in his own 'The Art of Fiction' (1884), that 'a novel is a picture of life', attends to the encroaching 'psychological'¹³⁴ dimension even while dismissing it. It was James who recognized the potential in transforming the inner, lived experience into a 'picture' or 'portrait' and claimed to 'see dramas within dramas in that, and innumerable points of view. A psychological reason is, to my imagination, an object adorably pictorial' (*AF*, p. 41). Again wrestling with the question of the positionality of the perceiving

¹²⁷ Stang, *The Theory of the Novel in England 1850-1870*, p. 149.

¹²⁸ The painter/novelist analogy may be 'complete' in 'The Art of Fiction' despite James's occasional denial of this synonymity - a 'dictionary' is not 'a palette of colours', nor is 'a goose-quill...a brush' (*Notes and Reviews*, p. 18) - yet his generally incurious use of words encourages evasive allusions to other arts to creep in. He claimed that Stevenson 'regards literary form not simply as a code of signals, but as the key-board of a piano, and as so much plastic material' (*PP*, p. 140). Hardy demonstrates a similar propensity for the mixing of artistic metaphors, instructing his readers 'to see in half and quarter views the whole picture, to catch from a few bars the whole tune' (*SF*, p. 137), itself a distinct echo of James's reference to the imagination's 'power to guess the unseen from the seen, to trace the implication of things, to judge the whole piece by the pattern' (*Notes on Novelists* (London: Dent, 1914), p. 201). See Viola Hopkins Winner, *Henry James and the Visual Arts* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1970).

¹²⁹ Grundy, *Hardy and the Sister Arts*, p. 33.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹³¹ *The Bookman*, II (April 1892), p. 6.

¹³² D.F. Hannigan, *Westminster Review*, CXLV (Jan 1896), 136-9; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 260-263 (I, 261); Havelock Ellis, 'Thomas Hardy's Novels', *Westminster Review*, CXIX, n.s. LXIII (April 1883), 334-64; rpt. *TH:CA*, III, 27-51 (III, 41). Also in *Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage*, ed. R.G. Cox (London and New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), pp. 103-32 (p. 120). Hereafter cited as *H:CH*.

¹³³ Norman Page, *Thomas Hardy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 71.

¹³⁴ Andrew Lang, 'The Art of Fiction', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 39 (April 30, 1884), 1-2 (p. 2).

consciousness, James confronts the paradoxical need for simultaneous detachment and involvement:

How can the artist, the painter of life, the recorder, the observer, stand on the outside of things and write about them, and throw himself at the same time into the act of living?...How become involved in life - and remain uninvolved? ¹³⁵

This may have been *the* question for James, but the dilemma of participation (the creative) versus distance (the critical) was a topic of general speculation, Gosse's article on the perennial battle waged between 'the realistic and the poetical schools of painting' (*LN*, I, 1304)¹³⁶ prompting a reaction from Hardy which consolidated his aloofness from the former and sympathy with the latter. Gosse's review and Hardy's notes declare that mature art synthesizes two mutually-exclusive impulses and records 'the endeavour of the artist now to forget himself in what he sees, & now to transfuse all the external world with his own thought and emotion' (*LN*, I, 1304). Page's carefully qualified statement that "'pictorialism" perhaps means more in relation to Hardy than to almost any other English novelist'¹³⁷ may, or may not, acknowledge that expression of (psychological) realism through pictorial equivalence was equally typical of George Eliot, and current reviewers homed in on their technical, but not skillful, similarity: 'the author of *Romola* and *The Mill on the Floss* is a great artist' but 'the author of *Far from the Madding Crowd* is a dauber by comparison'.¹³⁸

Such phraseology was common-place given the aesthetic bias of the Victorian reader and critic. As Patmore explains,

no generation has ever attempted to paint itself in the same way and with the same fidelity...[W]e have had stores of 'fiction' which are only fiction in form; the substance being the very reality of contemporary life.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Leon Edel, *Henry James: The Conquest of London, 1870-1883* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1962), p. 178.

¹³⁶ Edmund Gosse, 'Cecil Lawson', *The Times* (May 3, 1883), p. 7. See also Gosse's related *Aspects and Impressions* (London: Cassell, 1922).

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Anon., review of *FMC*, *The Observer* (Jan 3, 1875); rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 70-2 (I, 71). Seventeen years earlier, *Adam Bede* attracted the same figurative response: 'Lisbeth is a very perfect picture' and 'Hetty is a wonderful piece of painting. One seems to see the little villain' (*Blackwood's Magazine*, March 31, 1858; Oct 4, 1858 respectively).

¹³⁹ Coventry Patmore, *St James's Gazette* (April 2, 1887), rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 156-158 (I, 156).

There was an obvious penchant for picture-books and Hardy apparently obliged, but Fernando's perceptive analysis belies this seeming acquiescence and exposes Hardy's strategy as a deliberate movement away from realism:

His pictures are less pictures of reality than pictures of pictures...The writing ...is...self-enclosing...[and draws] its inspiration from a species of personal emotion...not sufficiently disciplined by the ordinary realistic demands of the novel.¹⁴⁰

On the other hand, Grundy's discourse affects a compromise between Hardy's 'actual' (objective) and 'hallucinatory' (subjective) pictures:

the effect...is to heighten rather than to diminish our sense of reality. The pictures are so vivid that they have life, as actual pictures...have it. Their effect is simultaneously to idealize and to reify. The pictures have such finish and perfection as pictures that we seem to see the scenes and objects depicted with an almost hallucinatory clarity.¹⁴¹

Hardy's most obvious contribution to "pictorealism" is *Under the Greenwood Tree*, and in pronouncing itself 'A Painting of the Dutch School'¹⁴² addresses the connotations ascribed to the genre by Eliot in *Adam Bede*:

It is for this rare, precious quality of truthfulness that I delight in many Dutch paintings, which lofty-minded people despise. I find a source of delicious sympathy in these faithful pictures of a monotonous homely existence. (*AB*, Ch. 17)¹⁴³

In her uncompromising truth to 'things as they are or have been' (ib.),¹⁴⁴ Eliot was hailed as the exemplar of true realism,¹⁴⁵ and though Cecil lauded her as 'the first modern

¹⁴⁰ Lloyd Fernando, 'Thomas Hardy's Rhetoric of Painting', *Review of English Literature*, 6 (Oct. 1965), 63-71 (p. 71).

¹⁴¹ Grundy, *Hardy and the Sister Arts*, p. 23.

¹⁴² A comparison which 'was to be used for countless other novels in the course of the century' (Stang, *The Theory of the Novel in England 1850-1870*, p. 142).

¹⁴³ Crispin Sartwell's 'What Pictorial Realism Is', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 34:1 (Jan 1994), 2-12, includes N. Goodman's objections to equating realism with verisimilitude, and concludes that 'a picture is realistic to the extent that its visually discernible, variable properties overlap with recognitionally relevant properties of its object' (p. 12).

¹⁴⁴ Cp. Byron's insistence that the virtue of *Don Juan* (1819-24), in *The Poetical Works of Lord Byron*, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: John Murray, 1905; rpt. 1958), lay in its truthfulness. Like his hero, Byron has seen what the world is really like, and using this experience,

I mean to show things as they really are,
Not as they ought to be: for I avow,
That till we see what's what in fact, we're far
From much improvement. (Canto XII, lines 40-3)

Serious in his use of the final word, whatever critical outrage it provoked, Byron believed that only by fastening upon the truth could he moralize his convictions: 'He thought he was writing a most moral book. That women did not like it he was not surprised; he knew they could not bear it because it took off the veil...[T]hey hated it because it showed and exposed their hypocrisy' (*Letters and Journals*, VI,

novelist'¹⁴⁶ she in fact hindered the evolution of realism in England by capitulating before prejudice. Though, like Hardy, Eliot protests against the imposition of 'any aesthetic rules which shall banish from the region of Art...these more or less ugly, stupid, inconsistent people' (*AB*, Ch. 17), she is divorced from him by her artistic conservatism and her denunciation of the suffocation of the real by the 'amplifying' power of the creative faculty:

Our social novels profess to represent the people as they are, the unreality of their representation is a grave evil...Art is the nearest thing to life; it is a mode of amplifying experience. (*E*, p. 271)¹⁴⁷

Hardy, it seems, may have been a little too successful in fusing art and life through emotional equivalence.

INDETERMINATE REPRESENTATIONS

One of the most important studies to date is Bullen's *Expressive Eye*¹⁴⁸ which, unlike many others discussions of Hardy's pictorial strategy, shows what Hardy does with these sources and explains how he links image and idea, visual perception and meaning, through feeling. Emotions, the force inspiring fiction and painting, are communicated as impressions, and for James, as for Hardy, an artefact's value is estimated by the 'intensity

429-30). The truth to which Byron stoops, in the tracks of Pope, is a matter of fidelity to observable, objective facts. His frequent expressions of impatience with metaphysical speculations is a characteristic which affiliates him more with his Augustan predecessors than his Romantic contemporaries.

¹⁴⁵ See William J. Hyde, 'George Eliot and the Climate of Realism', *PMLA*, 72 (1957), 147-64; Robert Gorham Davis, 'The Sense of the Real in English Fiction', *Comparative Literature*, 3 (1951), 200-17.

¹⁴⁶ In *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, Johnson contends that 'the modern novel of today, in all its phases and developments, seems in my judgement to begin with the work of George Eliot', and 'in reading George Eliot, I am led to think about her successors, and in no slight degree, about Mr Hardy' (p. 26). A contemporary critic hailed her as 'a new novelist' (*George Eliot: The Critical Heritage*, ed. David Carroll (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 67) making a new contribution to fiction, but in fact it was Thackeray who stood as the exponent of a new kind of literary genre - Realism, or fidelity to the actual details of real life. See Stang, *The Theory of the Novel in England 1850-1870*, p. 147. For an extended discussion of Thackeray, see George Levine, *The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction from 'Frankenstein' to 'Lady Chatterley'* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 131-80. See also Lina Wright Berle, *George Eliot and Thomas Hardy: A Contrast* (New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1917).

¹⁴⁷ Dickens may have been the writer who began shaping the form the social novel was to take in the 1840s by creating a vision of contemporary realities which were organized and unified. Eliot may also be alluding to Carlyle whose work was directly responsible for the Victorian social novel. Such works were realistic in the sense that they endeavoured to depict the actual conditions of England. Disraeli also argued that the novel should be used to examine the nature of reality and experience, but it was not until the 1870s that the term 'social realism' was used to define a number of artists associated with *The Graphic* and the *Illustrated London News*, their work usually portraying the urban and industrial. Hubert Herkomer was one of the group's leading members, his 'Hard Times' (1885) warranting comparison with the opening of *MC*, Hardy's first novel to include an element of 'social realism'. See Jim Reilly, *Shadowtime: History and Representation in Hardy, Conrad and George Eliot* (London: Routledge, 1993).

¹⁴⁸ J.B. Bullen, *The Expressive Eye: Fiction and Perception in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

of impression' (*AF*, p. 62) conveyed. James also hypothesises that reading is an activity in which 'spots of indeterminacy' (*PP*, p. 59) make themselves available for completion by author and reader working in unison,¹⁴⁹ a kind of co-production which anticipates Woolf's identification of the necessary response to the 'margin of the unexpressed'¹⁵⁰ in Hardy. Woolf's argument presents Hardy as possessed by a paradoxical psychology:

the mind which is most capable of revealing impressions is very often the least capable of drawing conclusions...It is for the reader, steeped in the impression, to supply the comment. It is his part to know when to put aside the writer's conscious intention in favour of some deeper intention of which perhaps he may be unconscious.¹⁵¹

These collaborative projects, culminating in 'unadjusted impressions',¹⁵² are the processes of their own inimitable value:

There is always about them a little blur of unconsciousness...and margin of the unexpressed...It is as if Hardy himself were not quite aware of what he did, as if his consciousness held more than he could produce, and he left it for his readers to make out his full meaning and supplement it from their own experience.¹⁵³

By its very nature literature 'has its *margins*, an area of incompleteness from which we can observe its birth and production',¹⁵⁴ and Hardy's work seems readily susceptible to the deconstructive approach of Hillis Miller: 'The bottom drops out, or there is an "abyssing", an insight one can almost grasp or recognize...but not quite.'¹⁵⁵ Uncertainty and indeterminacy simply are in Hardy, but he is not as unconscious as Woolf implies. The novels show him deliberately searching for a method which will express this margin without analysing it out of existence, a contingency which partly explains the 'conjectural' (*W*, V) and 'unstateable' (*JO*, 4.II) basis of his most complex personalities and the

¹⁴⁹ James had a 'reception theory' that, like other contemporary versions, perceived the text as a kind of quasi-potentiality. Paul Armstrong, *The Phenomenology of Henry James* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), names this James's 'teleology of the impression' (p. 40).

¹⁵⁰ Virginia Woolf, 'The Novels of Thomas Hardy' (1928), in *The Common Reader: Second Series* (London: Hogarth Press, 1932), pp. 245-257 (p. 248); rpt. *Collected Essays*, ed. Leonard Woolf, 2 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1966), I, 256-66 (I, 258).

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Preface to *Poems of the Past and Present* (1901), in *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, pp. 38-9 (p. 39).

¹⁵³ Woolf, 'The Novels of Thomas Hardy', I, 258.

¹⁵⁴ Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production*, trans. G. Wall (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 90.

¹⁵⁵ J. Hillis Miller, 'Steven's Rock and Criticism as Cure, II', *Georgia Review*, 30:1 (Spring 1976), 330-48 (p. 344).

narratives in which they move. In this at least, Hardy foreshadows the Lawrentian exploration of 'the dark continent of myself', the 'darkest avenues of the soul'.¹⁵⁶

In 1924, Hardy noted part of an argument offered by Pearsall Smith:

In every representation of Nature which is a work of art there is to be found...something which is not to be found in the aspect of Nature which it represents; & what that something is has been a matter of dispute from the earliest days of criticism. (*PNB*, p. 86)¹⁵⁷

This elusive 'something', this margin, contains the potential for real creativity. Ruskin knew it: imaginative intercession 'opens for us a way down to the heart, leads us to the centre, and then leaves us to gather what more we may' (*Works*, IV, 252). There is 'an awful undercurrent of meaning' which is 'often obscure, often half-told; he who wrote it, in his clear seeing of the things beneath, may have been impatient of detailed interpretation' (ib.), but 'the imagination sees the heart and inner nature' though 'often obscure, mysterious, and interrupted, in its giving of outer detail' (*Works*, IV, 253). To disclose this 'heart and inner meaning' (*EL*, p. 232; Jan 1886), Hardy expected the complicity of his reader who must exercise

a generous imaginativeness, which shall find in the tale not only all that was put there by the author...but...what was never inserted by him... Sometimes these additions which are woven around a work of fiction by the intensive power of the reader's own imagination are the finest parts of the scenery. (*PRF*, p. 112)

Hardy's progressive visual formalizations, a series of incomplete, fluid patterns, demanded constant reconfiguration and the participation of a new kind audience, one which had to be

active rather than passive...[The] reader must not only accustom himself to read works that refer continually to things he can see, but...to grasp the meaning expressed by the things themselves...He must learn to read a verbal language that embodies a seemingly unmediated visual language.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ D.H. Lawrence, 'The Novel and the Feeling', in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. E.D. McDonald, 2 vols (New York: Viking, 1936; rpt. London: Heinemann, 1961), I, 755-60 (pp. 756, 759).

¹⁵⁷ Logan Pearsall Smith, *Four Words: Romance, Originality, Creative, Genius*, S.P.E. (Society for Pure English, of which Hardy was a member since its foundation in 1913), Tract No. XVII (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), p. 38.

¹⁵⁸ Alan Spiegel, *Fiction and the Camera Eye* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1976), pp. 24-7.

James's critique of *Adam Bede* made much the same supplication that the author

place the sympathetic reader at the stand-point to deduce for himself. In every novel the work is divided between the writer and the reader...The reader [must do]...his share of the task; the grand point is to get him to make it.¹⁵⁹

But whereas James's confidence in imaginative suggestiveness only strengthened as his career developed, Hardy had been a disciple from the outset. Only the truly 'perspicacious' reader can detect the author's ultimate purpose,

and by affording full scope to his own insight, catch the vision which the writer has in his eye, and is endeavouring to project upon the page even while it half eludes him. (*PRF*, p. 115)

As Lewes appreciated in his discourse on 'The Principle of Vision' (1865), 'the images, when called up, are only vanishing suggestions: they disappear before they are half formed'.¹⁶⁰ Hardy's mind/projector analogue extends the significance of Eliot's pier-glass, Zola's *écrans* and James's windows, and modernizes Locke's conception of the mind as a *camera obscura*¹⁶¹ which is re-introduced in the novels as a 'magic lantern' casting impressions (mind pictures) onto the outer world (screen). But Hardy endows his receptive psychic projector with an dynamic quality which Locke discounted.

IMPRESSIONS...

In manipulating the 'indeterminacy' of fictional 'impressions', Hardy produced novels wholly unlike his contemporaries'. Whereas James is engrossed by 'solidity of specification' (*PP*, p. 390), Hardy lets the word 'impression' run like a *leit motif* through

¹⁵⁹ James, 'The Novels of George Eliot', *Atlantic Monthly*, 18 (Oct 1866), 479-92 (p. 485). See also Lubbock, *The Craft of Fiction*, who discusses the collaborative process undertaken by reader and author; both work together 'to create the novel in its right form...The reader of a novel - by which I mean the critical reader - is himself a novelist; he is the maker of a book which may or may not please his taste when it is finished, but of a book for which he must take his own share of the responsibility' (p. 17).

¹⁶⁰ G.H. Lewes, 'The Principles of Success in Literature', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 (1865), 85-95, 'The Principle of Vision': 185-96, 'Of Vision in Art': 572-89, 697-709; 2 (1865), 257-68, 689-710 (1, p. 190).

¹⁶¹ On the history of the *camera obscura*, see Erika von Erhardt-Siebold, 'Some Inventions of the Pre-Romantic Period', *Englische Studien*, LXVI (1931-2), pp. 347ff.

his notes. The preface to *Poems of the Past and the Present* (1901) claims that 'unadjusted impressions have their value'; the mission of poetry in general is 'to record impressions, not convictions' (*LY*, p. 178; Dec 1917), and his own verse in particular represents not so much a coherent view of life as a 'series of fugitive impressions which I have never tried to co-ordinate' (*LLE*, p. 53); his prose is an accumulation of provisional 'impressions of the moment, and not convictions or arguments' (*GP*, p. 49), 'seemings, provisional representations only' (*LY*, p. 175; March 1917); *Jude the Obscure* places itself and its predecessors as 'simply an endeavour to give shape and coherence to a series of seemings, or personal impressions' (*JO*, Pref). In the final analysis, 'Art is concerned with seemings only' (*LY*, Jan 1917; p. 174).¹⁶²

Inevitably, Hardy was attracted to the Impressionist school which he regarded as 'even more suggestive in the direction of literature than in that of art' (*EL*, p. 241; Dec 1886), 'suggestive' and appropriate in that this style 'embodied a highly subjective response to visual stimuli'.¹⁶³ As Bullen continues, Hardy 'responded enthusiastically to the highly personal aspects of the new movement',¹⁶⁴ and excited by their similarity of conviction, Hardy saw his own beliefs reflected in the school's defining precept: 'that which you carry away with you from a scene is the true feature to grasp; or...*what appeals to your own individual eye and heart in particular*' (*EL*, p. 241).¹⁶⁵ Though Hardy's impressions record an individual's experiences and perceptions, they also allow the reader to see what confronts the 'bewildered child': they imagistically translate Hardy's personal views into available sensory experiences. Yet attempts to categorize Hardy's theoretical or philosophical predilections are rendered futile because of this indeterminacy: 'I have no philosophy - merely what I have often explained to be only a

¹⁶² 'Art' originally read 'Imaginative work' (*PNB*, p. 266). See Walter F. Wright, 'A Novel is an Impression, not an Argument', in *Budmouth Essays on Thomas Hardy: Papers Presented at the 1975 Summer School*, ed. F.B. Pinion (Dorchester: Thomas Hardy Society, 1976), pp. 154-67.

¹⁶³ Bullen, *The Expressive Eye*, p. 182. See Howard Mills, "'The World of Substance': Lawrence, Hardy, Cezanne, and Shelley', *Journal of the English Association*, 177:43 (Autumn 1994), 209-22, who considers D.H. Lawrence's treatment of corporeality and spirituality and their relation to Impressionist painting, and then compares this approach with Hardy and Shelley.

¹⁶⁴ Bullen, *The Expressive Eye*, p. 182.

¹⁶⁵ Given his temperament, it was inevitable that Hardy found himself susceptible to the censured, self-indulgent canvases of Bonington and Turner. For the influence Turner exerted, particularly on *TD*, see Bullen, *The Expressive Eye*, pp. 197 ff. Hardy also owned a copy of Bonington's 'Landscape of Down and Stream' in his drawing-room which was given to Emma by Thomas Woolner. Hardy seems to have anticipated 'The Futurist vision', the blend of 'the impressionist & the fauvist', the latter being 'concerned with the essentials of a scene that remain in the memory' (*LN*, II, 2413; M.T.H. Sadler, 'The Past and Present of Futurism', *Blue Book*, I (May 1912), 55-60).

heap of confused impressions like those of a bewildered child at a conjuring show' (*LY*, p. 218; Dec 1920).¹⁶⁶ Hardy was no doubt thinking of Hume at this point:

What we call a *mind*, is nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions, united together by certain relations, and suppos'd, tho' falsely, to be endow'd with a perfect simplicity and identity.¹⁶⁷

It is also possible that Hardy's understanding and use of the term is predicated upon Hume's definition of 'impressions' as

all our more lively perceptions, when we hear, or see, or feel, or love, or hate, or desire, or will. And impressions are distinguished from ideas, which are the less lively perceptions, of which we are conscious, when we reflect on any of those sensations or movements above mentioned.¹⁶⁸

Though Hardy did not read Hume until the 1870s, he had access to his theories through Bagehot's essay on Shelley in *Estimates of Some Englishmen and Scotsmen* which he read in 1861. Hardy and Hume vindicate Shelley's monistic philosophy as it appears in 'On Life': 'The view of life presented by the most refined deductions of metaphysics is that of unity: Nothing exists but as it is perceived'. For Hume, a coherent view of the world is provided by the presence of a 'constant conjunction'¹⁶⁹ between things, but it is simply the logical consequence of familiarity or 'custom' - 'the effect of repeated perceptions' - which allows us to apply a 'continued existence' to objects in themselves devoid of any mutual connection;¹⁷⁰ the sensations and impressions brought to them by perception are alien. As far as Hume is concerned, we can only know the 'impression' that artefacts make on our sensory faculties, an inheritance from Berkeley who limited the existence and reality of phenomenal matter to our perception of it.

¹⁶⁶ See Timothy Hands, 'A Bewildered Child and his Conjurors': Hardy and the Ideas of his Time', in *New Perspectives on Thomas Hardy*, ed. Charles P.C. Pettit (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 137-55. See also Joanna Gibson, 'Thomas Hardy: A Borrowing from Schopenhauer', *Notes and Queries*, 40:4 (Dec 1993), 492-3. Gibson suggests that Hardy's notes show an indebtedness to Schopenhauer's *Studies in Pessimism* for this 'bewildered child' image. See also Helen Garwood, *Thomas Hardy: An Illustration of the Philosophy of Schopenhauer* (Philadelphia: John C. Winston, 1911). The most important research into Hardy's philosophy includes Patrick Braybrooke, *Thomas Hardy and his Philosophy* (London: C.W. Daniel Co., 1928); Jagdish Chandra Dave, 'Was Hardy a Philosopher?', *The Human Predicament in Hardy's Novels* (London: Macmillan, 1985), pp. 3-16; Brenda Jo Brueggmann, 'Thomas Hardy: A Study of his Philosophy', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 17 (1988), 43-50; D. Jacobson, 'Thomas Hardy: The Poet as Philosopher', *American Scholar*, 65:5 (1996), 114-8.

¹⁶⁷ David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature*, eds. T.H. Green and T.H. Grose, 2 vols (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1874), I, 495.

¹⁶⁸ David Hume, *Hume's Enquiries Concerning the Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), p. 18. See also Daniel E. Flage, *David Hume's Theory of Mind* (London: Routledge, 1990).

¹⁶⁹ Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature*, I, 466.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 485.

Hylas's naive view that 'to *exist* is one thing, and to be *perceived* is another'¹⁷¹ is corrected by Philonous's catechism: perceived, and therefore created, objects, are conglomerations of 'sensible qualities'¹⁷² existing only in the mind. For Hardy, too, the essential reality or 'poetry' belongs to the perceiving consciousness:

We don't always remember...that in getting at the truth, we get only at the true nature of the impression that an object, etc., produces on us, the true thing in itself being still, as Kant shows, beyond our knowledge. (*LY*, p. 9; July 1892)¹⁷³

Hardy insists that impressions are all that we can hope to receive and that art can present, and his literary aesthetic, however conditional and eclectic, revolves around his 'mental pictures'.¹⁷⁴ Such individualism was defended by Stephen's 'The Moral Element in Literature' (1881) which argued that the imaginative writer 'shows us certain facts as they appear to him'. If we agree with what is shown, then we discern a reality which 'has all the cogency of direct vision', and our perceptions of phenomenal reality will be readjusted because 'the bare scaffolding of fact which we previously saw will now be seen in the light of keener perceptions than our own'.¹⁷⁵ Additionally, Symonds's 'Realism and Idealism' (1887) declared the impossibility of 'imitat[ing] things exactly as they are in fact' because 'in every imitative effort, worthy of the name of art, the human mind has intervened'.¹⁷⁶ Art is subjective and incapable of delineating an exact representation of reality. Hardy went on to cite Symonds's reductive definition of 'Realism & Idealism' as 'a hackneyed antithesis, like Subject & Object' (*LN*, II, 1822),¹⁷⁷ and, in a phrase which Hardy would adapt, Symonds maintains that 'fugitive perfections' are the most that can be expected given that 'Realism is the presentation of natural

¹⁷¹ Berkeley, *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*, p. 11.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Cp. Marcel Proust, 'On the Falsity of Realism', *DMLR*, pp. 549-564: 'The impression [the object] has made upon us, is always the guarantee of its indispensable truth...Only the subjective impression...is a criterion of truth' (p. 561); and: 'Only the impression...is a criterion of truth' (Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans C.K. Scott Moncrieff, et al, 3 vols (New York: Random House; London: Chatto & Windus, 1981), III, 914). See *LN*, II, 2042: 'Kant had shown that all known or knowable objects are relative to a conscious subject, & that...we cannot...treat them as *things in themselves*' (Edward Caird, 'Hegel', *Chambers's Encyclopaedia* (London and Edinburgh, 1890), V, 620). Hardy made extensive notes on Kantian philosophy in 1904. See *LN*, II, 2263-4.

¹⁷⁴ Ernest Brenneke, *The Life of Thomas Hardy* (New York: Greenberg, 1928): 'Ideas presented themselves to his mind in the guise of mental pictures than as subjects for writing down' (pp. 113-4).

¹⁷⁵ Leslie Stephen, 'The Moral Element in Literature', *Cornhill*, XLIII (1881), 34-50. See also his 'Art and Morality', *Cornhill*, XXXII (1875), 91-101.

¹⁷⁶ J.A. Symonds, 'Realism and Idealism', *Fortnightly Review*, 42 (1887), 418-29 (pp. 420-1); rpt. *Essays Speculative and Suggestive*, I, 223. Hardy recorded this passage in *LN*, II, 1834.

¹⁷⁷ Symonds, *Essays Speculative and Suggestive*, I, 172.

objects as the artist sees them, as he thinks they are. It is the attempt to imitate things as they strike the senses'.¹⁷⁸ Seven years later, Johnson reinforced the belief that Hardy

has a vision of things so personal, from a point of view discovered by himself...[H]is characters are subtly coloured, or chemically compounded, by the idiosyncrasies of his psychological analysis.¹⁷⁹

Hardy's theory and practice provide an ambiguous reading experience and we watch as he simultaneously rebels and pretends conformity. Yet what remains constant is his unerring faith in the personality of the creative process, and though the concept does not originate with Hardy, he is the first to give it expression in prose fiction. Hardy recognized the innovativeness of his contributions, however futile he felt them to be, and in 1895 ranged himself with an obscure eye which wanders blindly 'in a chaos of principles - groping in the dark - acting by instinct and not after example' (*JO*, VI.1). There was no precedent for his kind of fictional experimentalism.

...AND EXPRESSIONS

The re-evaluation of the role of the perceiving mind in eighteenth-century poetry was repeated for prose in the nineteenth: the impressionistic mirror was supplanted by the expressionistic lamp; Art was no longer a tool for imitation but creation; the mind's eye was now an active projector not a passive reflector. According to Hauser, the empirical tradition reproduced 'the subjective act instead of the objective stratum of seeing', and by separating 'the optical elements of the experience from the conceptual' concentrated the artistic exploration onto 'the mood of the moment'. For Hauser, as for Locke, the impressionistic approach indicated 'a fundamentally passive outlook on life'¹⁸⁰ in which preformed actualities forced themselves as sensations upon the receptive mind.

Epistemologically, memory is all-important.¹⁸¹ Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) presents the mind as a Platonic 'mirror' unable to 'refuse,

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, I, 223, 426.

¹⁷⁹ Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, p. 170.

¹⁸⁰ Arnold Hauser, *The Social History of Art*, 4 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), III, 159.

¹⁸¹ Bain, 'Sense of Sight', in *The Senses and the Intellect*, pp. 222-59, also acknowledges this: 'We are apt to suppose that the entire conscious state at any one moment...is determined by the rays affecting the retina at that moment. The truth is, that what rises to the mind

alter or obliterate the images or ideas set before it',¹⁸² for 'the objects of our senses do... obtrude their particular ideas upon our minds whether we will or no'.¹⁸³ Next it is interpreted as a *camera obscura*, Locke's figure of the source and limitation of knowledge, whereby external and internal senses function as

the windows by which light is let into this *dark room*... Would the pictures coming into such a dark room but stay there, and lie so orderly as to be found upon occasion, it would very much resemble the understanding of man, in reference to all objects of sight, and the ideas of them.¹⁸⁴

In another metaphor it appears as a *tabula rasa*, a sheet of 'white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas',¹⁸⁵ which attracts and fastens all sensory impressions to which it is exposed.¹⁸⁶ And, after Aristotle, the mind is a 'waxed tablet' onto which sensations are fixed as impressions.¹⁸⁷ As Davies says,

In their determination to show that all ideas, all thoughts... were derived from sensory experience and from nothing else, the empirical philosophers from Locke onward were led to present the mind as essentially passive and inactive... [E]xperience tends to be continuous and homogenous... no one piece of it being of greater importance than another.¹⁸⁸

conscious state at any one moment... is determined by the rays affecting the retina at that moment. The truth is, that what rises to the mind on the sight of an outward thing, is an aggregate of past impressions' (p. 243).

¹⁸² John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. A.C. Fraser, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), I, 143. Though Locke, Berkeley and Hume are conventionally regarded as the British Empiricists, their central concerns were not in all respects the same, though as an indication of a trend the title is reasonable. And it was Locke who established the position(s) to which the other two reacted. For an examination of 'British Empiricism', see D.W. Hamlyn, *The Penguin History of Western Philosophy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), Ch. 11, pp. 168-205. Hamlyn argues that 'the traditional interpretation of Locke... takes him as embracing a representative theory of perception and of the mind in general... although that does not clinch the matter, because by "perception" he could mean either the faculty or act or its object - what is perceived. Locke was not over-precise in his use of terms' (p. 169).

¹⁸³ Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, I, 142.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 212.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, I, 121. In an earlier draft, *An Essay Concerning the Understanding*, ed. Benjamin Rand (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1931), Locke says that the soul is 'at first perfectly *rasa tabula*, quite void...' (p. 61).

¹⁸⁶ In his essay on Wordsworth in his *Biographia Literaria* (1817), ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, vol VII *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Kathleen Coburn, 16 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), VII: (ii), Ch. XXII, pp. 119-59, Coleridge discusses master-pieces of poetic painting in the context of this figure. Referring to a passage in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (IX. 1001-10), Coleridge continues: 'This is creation rather than painting, or if painting, yet such, as with such co-presence of the whole picture flash'd at once upon the eye, as the sun paints in a camera obscura. But the poet must likewise understand and command what Bacon calls the *vestigia communia* of the senses, the latency of all in each, and more especially as by a magical *penna duplex*, the excitement of vision by sound' (p. 128). See also J.A. Symonds's poem, 'The Camera Obscura' (1880), which propounds the same inclusive doctrine:

Inside the skull the wakeful brain...
Surveys the world he may not win:
Whate'er he sees, he notes, for nought
Escapes the living net of thought.

¹⁸⁷ Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, I, 48n. Cp. Zola: 'l'œil a retenu les tableaux qui l'ont frappé tout d'abord' (*Oeuvres Complètes*, X, 1287). Cp. Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (1847), ed. Q.D. Leavis (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966): when Jane sees a new face, it becomes 'like a new picture introduced to the gallery of memory, and it was dissimilar of all the other object hanging there' (Ch. 12).

¹⁸⁸ Hugh Sykes Davies, 'Wordsworth and the Empirical Philosophers', in *The English Mind: Studies in the English Moralists Presented to Basil Willey*, eds. H.S. Davies and George Watson (London: Cambridge University Press, 1964), pp. 153-74 (pp. 157, 160). Berkeley's Hylas distinguishes 'the active and the passive in every perception', contending that the mind is active 'when it produces, puts an end to, or changes anything'. Philonous proceeds to argue his conversant into a labyrinth (*Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*, pp. 32, 33). See also Berkeley's *The Theory of Vision Vindicated and Explained* (1733); P.D., Currmins, 'Perceptual

Yet when Hardy sees and remembers something, he actively selects for permanent record only those details which possess the interest of emotional associations.¹⁸⁹ As the narrator of *A Laodicean* asserts, 'the mind of man cannot always be forced to take up subjects by the pressure of their material presence' (*La*, Ch. 1),¹⁹⁰ the psyche omits and prioritizes, it is far from passive. Idealist philosophy sees that the mind works actively in the act of perception, and knows by its own energy.

Hockney's recent experiments in photography, denouncing passivity, reinforce Arnheim's observation that 'active selectivity is a basic trait of vision'.¹⁹¹ Hockney, like Hardy, criticizes and mistrusts the photographic science because it is 'obsessed with subject matter', and he inclines toward the 'way things catch your eye'.¹⁹² Moreover, his description of how we actually see validates Hardy's poetical doctrine of perception as process:

If...I caught all of you in one frozen look, the experience would be dead...
like...an ordinary photograph... Vision consists of a continuous accumulation
of details perceived across time and synthesized into a larger, continuously
metamorphosing whole.¹⁹³

Hockney's reference to the 'continuous experience of the world' differs from Davies's proposal that 'experience tends to be continuous and homogenous' and Hume's theories

Relativity and Ideas in the Mind', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, XXIV (1963-4), 202-214; M.R. Ayers, 'Substance, Reality, and the Great, Dead Philosophers', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, VII (1970), 38-49; Jonathan Bennett, *Locke, Berkeley, Hume: Central Themes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

¹⁸⁹ Cp. Zola: a realistic work of art is 'un coin de la création vu à travers un temperament' ('Mes Haines', in *Oeuvres Complètes*, X, 38). And 'Hardy said that all imaginative work was events seen through a temperament. That unconscious or conscious selections by the personality of the author must colour the work' (Elliott Felkin, 'Days with Thomas Hardy', *Encounter*, XVIII (April 1962), 27-33 (p. 27)).

¹⁹⁰ By contrast is the argument in Wordsworth's 'Expostulation and Reply' (1798):

'Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.'

¹⁹¹ Rudolph Arnheim, *Visual Thinking* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 20. See also his *Art and Visual Perception* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

¹⁹² Lawrence Weschler, 'Art World', *New Yorker* (July 9, 1984), 60-71 (p. 63). Hardy regarded this 'heliographic science' (*La*, V.4) with a degree of sceptical reservation. He mistrusted its semi-scientific realism and the way it could manipulate images when 'contriving to produce what seemed to be a perfect likeness' (*La*, V.5). Dare, that 'maker of negatives' (*La*, I.8), wilfully 'distorts' so that the fallacious is accepted as 'a genuine illustration' (*La*, V.4). For an analysis of Hardy's references to photography, see Arlene M. Jackson, 'Photography as Style and Metaphor in the Art of Thomas Hardy', *Thomas Hardy Annual: No. 2*, ed. Norman Page (London: Macmillan, 1984), 91-109. Mark Simons's recent 'Hardy's Stereographic Technique', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XIII: 3 (Oct 1997), 86-93, is of critical importance. Simons offers that 'the Victorian art of stereography, neglected thus far in Hardy studies, has much to offer in the consideration of Hardy's writing: it is a popular art which works synergistically to bridge the historical gap between photography and cinematography' (p. 86). G.D. Klingopulos, 'The Literary Scene', in *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature: 6. From Dickens to Hardy*, ed. Boris Ford (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958; rev. 1982), pp. 57-112, begins by remarking that 'with the Victorians we reach the age of photography. That fact alone may at first suggest new possibilities of clarity, precision, and certainty in our estimates of Victorian writers. Later, the disadvantages of being close to the object, and of possessing masses of information about it, make themselves felt, especially when we attempt to review the period summarily' (p. 57).

¹⁹³ Weschler, 'Art World', pp. 62, 63.

on the 'continued existence' of things because it admits active selection into the visual act. Like Hardy, Hockney is anxious about the exclusivity of the focal point of view which changes as the zone held by the eye shifts; both are conscious of multiplicity, of seeing enough and of holding it all together. That is why Hardy's narratives are a provisional 'series of seemings'; it is only possible to see through numerous, decentred seemings.¹⁹⁴

In 1873, Pater addressed this topic in *The Renaissance*: 'At first sight experience seems to bury us under a flood of external objects, pressing upon us with a sharp and importunate reality', and 'call[s] us out of ourselves in a thousand forms of action'.¹⁹⁵ Memory works like a catalyst, and when it revises these actualities they are 'dissipated under its influence',¹⁹⁶ cohesive integrity is suspended like magic, and 'each object is loosed into a group of impressions...in the mind of the observer'.¹⁹⁷ The consequence of paying such speculative attention to this world 'not of objects in the solidity with which language invests them, but of impressions, unstable, flickering, inconsistent', is that 'the whole scope of observation is dwarfed into the narrow chamber of the individual mind'.¹⁹⁸ Epistemological concerns become a matter of visual experience, of visual learning, and knowledge of reality is reduced to a mass of impressions: 'Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world.'¹⁹⁹ In Chapter XII of *The Trumpet Major*, Hardy perceives our essential loneliness, 'each dwelling all to himself in the hermitage of his own mind' and projecting one world into external existence. The reality of each 'phase' of this world depends upon the 'I/eye as described in 'Rome: the Vatican: Sala delle Muse' (*CP*, 70):

¹⁹⁴ And only Hardy explains why certain things are recreatively held 'In the Mind's Eye' (*CP*, 177) while others are consigned to oblivion. Each image engraved upon the mind's eye is an emotively-charged 'involute', to use De Quincey's term, a mixture of 'concrete objects' (Thomas de Quincey, 'The Affliction of Childhood', *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*, ed. David Masson, 14 vols (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1889-90; London: Adam and Charles Black, 1897), XIV, 128). See the above chapter on *PBE*, p. 27.

¹⁹⁵ Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (1873; London: Macmillan, 1920), 'Conclusion', pp. 233-9 (p. 234).

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.* Cp. F.H. Bradley: 'regarded as an existence which appears in a soul, the whole world for each is peculiar and private to that soul' ('Body and Soul', in *Appearance and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co.; New York: Macmillan, 1893), Ch. XXIII pp. 295-358 (p. 346)).

¹⁹⁸ Pater, *The Renaissance*, p. 235. This is evidently a variation on Plato's myth of the cave in the *Republic*, VII. It also recalls Locke's conception of the mind as 'a closet wholly shut from light, with only some little openings left to let in external visible resemblances or ideas of things without' (*Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II, xi, 17); and the conclusion to Blake's second 'Memorable Fancy' in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793): 'For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern'.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

'And that one is I; and I am projected from thee,
One that out of thy brain and heart thou causest to be -
Extern to thee nothing...'

'NECESSARY EXAGGERATION'²⁰⁰

Eliot, horrified by this egocentric perversion of truth, duly punishes Dorothea for her 'moral stupidity', her incipient tendency to 'imagine more than the fact', and the consequential production of a reality which is 'mere fancy, the illusion of exaggerated sensitiveness' (*M*, Ch. 21). For Eliot, exaggeration and realism are mutually exclusive, and in 1855 she praised Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* because 'his mode of treatment seems ...really moral in its significance. It is without exaggeration...he quietly follows the stream of fact and of life' (*E*, p. 146). In this light, Hardy is neither real nor moral, yet his understanding of Art's ethical obligations hinges on distinguishing two forms of exaggeration:

(1) The kind which increases the sense of vraisemblance: (2) That which diminishes it...Art is a disproportioning (i.e. distorting, throwing out of proportion) - of realities, to show more clearly the features which matter in those realities, which, if merely copied or reported inventorially might probably be observed, but would more probably be overlooked. Hence 'realism' is not Art. (*EL*, p. 299; Aug 1890)²⁰¹

1910-26 found Hardy recording sympathetic points of view, that of Goethe, ironically enough, offering an almost exact echo:

Art is called art because it is not nature..."Realism" as it is called, denotes a low ebb of artistic power'...If it were so true to reality that it deceived the spectator who took it for Nature it would not be real Art at all, but mere artifice, mimicry & deceit'. (*LN*, II, 2375; 2419)²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Anon., 'The Exaggeration of Art', *Once a Week*, III, n.s. (1869), 123-5.

²⁰¹ Cp. William Minto: 'He studies feelings and conduct...as a naturalist, and with a naturalist's delight in what is strange and abnormal, out of the way, or in the way but not generally observed' ('The Work of Thomas Hardy', *Bookman*, I (Dec 1891), 99; rpt. *TH:CA*, III, 66-70 (III, 68)). And, as J.M. Barrie remarked, 'The man could not look out of a window without seeing something that had never been seen before' (quoted by James Gibson, '"The Characteristic of all Great Poetry - The General Perfectly Reduced in the Particular": Thomas Hardy', in *New Perspectives on Thomas Hardy*, ed. C.P.C. Pettit (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 1-15 (p. 14)).

²⁰² H.S. Chamberlain, *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. John Lees (London and New York, 1911), II, 559; Robert Fowler, 'Is Art a Failure?', *Nineteenth Century and After*, LXXII (July 1912), 126, 131.

While studying Shaw in 1926, Hardy parenthetically notes that a good play should "'produce an illusion of real life" without being a copy of real life. This is true romance. Realism - the opposite of art - "disillusioning" does not achieve this' (*LN*, II, 2456).²⁰³

The controversy over whether 'so-called realist art is art at all'²⁰⁴ did not find an equivocator in Lewes. His declaration that 'Realism is...the basis of all Art, its antithesis is not Idealism, but *Falsism*,²⁰⁵ inverts Hardy's sentence, and is reiterated in Eliot who, 'dreading nothing, indeed, but falsity', exposes the inadequacy of the imagination when it comes to transcribing 'a real unexaggerated' picture (*AB*, Ch. 17). Real art for Hardy was anything but an unexaggerated 'transcript', and he endorsed his novels with the injunction, 'Understand that however true this book may be in essence, in fact it is utterly false' (*LY*, p. 195; Oct 1919), and in feeling his way toward an unconventional kind of realistic fiction, emulated the Coleridgean precedent: 'aim at *illusion*,... the mental state...between complete *delusion*...and a clear perception of falsity' (*EL*, p. 197; Jan 1882). He manipulated the reader's 'willing suspension of disbelief', elevated the improbable to the status of an aesthetic doctrine, and envisaged fiction, inherently artificial, as directed toward simulating the '*illusion* of truth' (*PR1*', p. 135); art was 'the secret of how to produce by a false thing the effect of a true' (*EL*, p. 284; Jan 1889). This recognition surfaced as early as 1869: 'Realism is reached by artificial aids; simplicity by what may be called the necessary exaggeration of art,'²⁰⁶ and twenty years later, Wilde defined 'the proper aim of art' as 'the telling of beautiful untrue things'.²⁰⁷

Critics painted Hardy as one who always seemed to be 'deliberately challenging comparison with the strange twists and perversities of characters in real life'.²⁰⁸ Convinced that 'the real, if unavowed, purpose of fiction is to give pleasure by gratifying the love of the uncommon in human experience' (*EL*, p. 193; July 1881),²⁰⁹ Hardy

²⁰³ G.B. Shaw, *Translations and Tomfooleries* (London, 1926), p. 6.

²⁰⁴ Becker, *DMLR*, p. 37.

²⁰⁵ Lewes, 'Realism in Art', p. 439.

²⁰⁶ Anon., 'The Exaggeration of Art', *Once a Week*, III, n.s. (1869), 123-5.

²⁰⁷ Wilde, 'The Decay of Lying: An Observation', in *The Writings of Oscar Wilde*, p. 239. And the 'art' of lying dates back to the Aristotelian validation: 'Homer more than any other has taught the rest of us the art of telling lies in the right way. I mean the use of a fallacy' (*The Art of Poetry*, trans. Ingram Bywater, ed. W. Hamilton Fyfe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), Ch. 24, p. 68). (See n. 55 in the chapter on *MC*.) And, though speaking of poetry, Aristotle's maxim that 'a likely impossibility is always preferable to an unconvincing possibility' (Ch. 24, p. 69), found a sympathetic response in readers of Victorian fiction.

²⁰⁸ Minto, 'The Work of Thomas Hardy', *THCA*, III, 68.

²⁰⁹ According to Wordsworth, poetry is directed towards the same end: 'The Poet writes under one restriction only, namely, the necessity of giving pleasure to a human Being' ('Preface to Lyrical Ballads', in *Wordsworth: Poetry and Prose*, p. 163).

gradually removed the oppressive persistence of prosaic actualities from creative art. But even his attempt at compromise between two sorts of 'novelty' - 'novelty of *position* and *view* in relation to a known subject' and 'absolute novelty of subject' (*CL*, I, 8; 1868) - antagonized the widely-held view fostered by Millet and Whitman who, as Hardy well knew, 'insisted that the artist must deal with the average & typical, not with the exceptional' (*LN*, II, 1701).²¹⁰ For Zola too, interest was generated only when a story dealt with the usual: 'plus elle sera banale et générale, plus elle deviendra typique'.²¹¹ But Hardy believed that the whole 'secret of fiction' lay

in the adjustment of things unusual to things external and universal. The novelist who knows exactly how exceptional, and how non-exceptional, his events should be, possesses the key to the art. (*LY*, p. 16; Feb 1893).²¹²

Hardy's inventive 'wrenching and twisting of the frame of the real to provide a more penetrating vision, a more significant aesthetic experience',²¹³ is the artistry, or artfulness, that 'lies in shaping that uncommonness while disguising its unlikelihood' (*EL*, p. 194; July 1881). But this tendency frequently verges on the disturbing when impressions, stretched to breaking point by the imagination, acquire horrific dimensions: 'The dream-world, with its nightmare conjunctions, impinges suddenly on an until then perfectly sane world of...everyday experiences...The unreal falls like a lash on the prosaic and dull.'²¹⁴ These exuberant gestures are indicative of Hardy's powerful and unorthodox creativity; he rejects the conventional pattern and substitutes the design for a new kind of knowledge, 'an externalization - a visualization - of the absurd condition.'²¹⁵ But this teaching method involves an element of risk:

The direction of many of us will be toward concentration and the distortion that is necessary to get our vision across; it will be toward poetry, rather

²¹⁰ Havelock Ellis, 'Whitman', in *The New Spirit* (London, 1890), p. 107.

²¹¹ Zola, *Oeuvres Complètes*, X, 1286.

²¹² Cp. Wordsworth's 'principal object' in his poems, as stated in the 'Preface to Lyrical Ballads,' which is 'to throw over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect' (*Wordsworth: Poetry and Prose*, p. 152).

²¹³ Richard Carpenter, 'Hardy's "Gurgoyles"', *Modern Fiction Studies*, VI (Autumn 1960), 223-32 (p. 231).

²¹⁴ A.J. Guerard, *Thomas Hardy: The Novels and Stories* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1949), p. 86.

²¹⁵ Berger, *Thomas Hardy and Visual Structures*, p. 117.

than toward the traditional novel. The problem of such a novelist will be to know how far he can distort without also destroying.²¹⁶

The writer who knows these limits, as Hardy says, 'possesses the key to the art', but whether Hardy himself wielded this key is more problematic.

Hynes says that Hardy 'saw experiences as a configuration of opposites, every event contradicted or qualified by a succeeding event, an infinite sequence of destructive tensions'.²¹⁷ Though this holds to a certain extent, it is debatable whether antagonism rather than destruction is the motivating factor. Any scene initially construed as distinct from the fantastic and implausible contains a potential unreality which is unleashed when studied from an unusual angle; the result is an Absolute, a concept with which Dostoevsky sympathized:

What most people regard as fantastic and lacking in universality, I hold to be the inmost essence of truth. Arid observation of everyday trivialities I have long ceased to regard as realism - it is quite the reverse.²¹⁸

Hardy's odd use of multi-faceted viewpoints generates a series of formal incongruities, awkwardnesses and inconsistencies which have a devastating impact on the vision related; this is the essence of his grotesque, that 'aesthetic category determined by the subjective perception of the viewer...a mode of illusion'.²¹⁹ There is nothing orthodox in its strange combinations as the whole intention is to shock us into seeing. 'There is double vision, a clash between at least two assumptions of reality, which creates a tension without a resolution',²²⁰ and the presence of this potential chaos explains why conventional realism was wholly antipathetic to un-real or imaginative visions. In razing these prejudices, Hardy exaggerates and omits - distorts - by accentuating and dislocating what is already latent in the subject matter without jeopardizing the essential integrity of familiar elements.

²¹⁶ Flannery O'Connor quoted in Louis A. Lawson and J. Friedman, *The Added Dimension* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1966), p. 279.

²¹⁷ Samuel Hynes, *The Pattern of Hardy's Poetry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), p. 44.

²¹⁸ Letter to Nikolay Strachov (Feb 26, 1869), in *Letters of Fyodor Michailovitch Dostoevsky to his Family and Friends*, trans. E.C. Mayne (London: Peter Owen, 1962), pp. 166-7.

²¹⁹ Lewis A. Lawson, 'The Grotesque in Recent Southern Fiction', in *Patterns of Commitment in Southern Literature*, ed. Marston La France (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), pp. 166, 167.

²²⁰ Berger, *Thomas Hardy and Visual Structures*, p. 116. Lawson, 'The Grotesque in Recent Southern Fiction', sees this as characteristic of cultural upheavals; point of view becomes confused and subjective because the public dimension is absent (p. 170).

Such disruptive reworkings of the fabric of reality precipitate a vision which often resolves into the ugly, and Hardy makes no effort to side-step this eventuality. Eighteenth-century empirical tradition demanded that poetical art aestheticize nature through selectivity, Abrams citing Rapin's belief that the poet must not 'exhibit *Nature*, which in certain places is *rude* and *unpleasant*, he must chose in *her* what is *beautiful*, from what is *not*.'²²¹ Similarly, Hurd advised that 'the office of genius is but to select the fairest forms of things'.²²² This ethos continued well into the final quarter of the nineteenth century,²²³ and though Hardy recorded the Joubertian premise that 'Fiction has no business to exist unless it is more beautiful than reality' (*LN*, I, 1022),²²⁴ the early novels exhibit a poetic determination to 'see the beauty in ugliness' (*EL*, p. 158; April 1878). Not only is 'the beauty of association' now 'entirely superior to the beauty of aspect' (*ib.*); real beauty is only accessible to imaginative art:

If Nature's defects must be looked in the face and transcribed, whence arises the art in poetry and novel-writing?...I think the art lies in making these defects the basis of a hitherto unperceived beauty, by irradiating them with 'the light that never was' on their surface, but is seen to be latent in them by the spiritual eye. (*EL*, pp. 150-1; June 1877)²²⁵

This sentiment predominated until the late 1880s during which time Hardy's responses to reality underwent a radical change. Though he rebuked himself with the pronouncement that 'to find beauty in ugliness is the province of the poet' (*EL*, p. 279; Aug 1888), *The Woodlanders* is the first novel where this fails to hold. Hardy never recovered his earlier optimism.

²²¹ Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, p. 37.

²²² Richard Hurd, 'A Discourse Concerning Poetical Imitation' (1751), in *The Works of Richard Hurd*, 8 vols (London: T. Cadell & W. Davies, 1811), II, 111.

²²³ See Ian MacLaren, 'Ugliness in Fiction', *Literature*, I (1897), 80-1. Wordsworth's mind-'mirror' selects only the beautiful in nature: the Poet 'considers...the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting properties of nature' ('Preface to Lyrical Ballads', in *Wordsworth: Poetry and Prose*, p. 164).

²²⁴ Arnold, 'Joubert', in *Works*, III, 202.

²²⁵ Cp. Wordsworth's own dictum, as related by Coleridge, 'to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural by awakening the mind's attention...to the loveliness and wonder of the world before us' (*Biographia Literaria* (1817), VII: (ii). Ch. XIV, pp. 5-18 (p. 7)).

THE FIN DE SIÈCLE

Hardy's anti-conventionalism became more pronounced as his intellectual and literary scepticism deepened. Though he keenly resented the restrictions imposed by tradition upon fiction during his first, inauspicious years as a novelist, it was not until 1874 that he realized fully the cramping effect they had on a writer's creative and social personality. He ranted against 'the irritating necessity of conforming to rules which in themselves have no virtue',²²⁶ and from the mid 1870s onward began the path to notoriety. He did 'nothing to conciliate possible enemies: there are no concessions to a vulgar, or to a fastidious, taste...no pandering to prejudice or to preference of any kind'.²²⁷ Quite simply, he loved 'the note of revolt'.²²⁸

This unwillingness to placate and comply prompted critics to disallow Hardy creditable literary status; *Jude the Obscure* gave them sufficient rope to hang him. Mrs Oliphant's famous diatribe against this 'perfection of filthiness'²²⁹ was widely supported, and were it not for the work's purity of motive, 'the whole thing would pass for a misdirected effort in decadent realism'.²³⁰ By the mid 1890s the term 'realism' had acquired the force of a damning insult, and 'realistic' topics were synonymous with the depraved and ugly, traits hardly endearing to a fastidious public.²³¹ 'The professional realists of these times...see only the seamy side of life, reproducing it with merciless detail, holding the mirror up to the unnatural',²³² and the French, blamed for the insidious proliferation of 'grimy realistic work',²³³ were convenient scapegoats for the slipping standards of English fiction in general and Hardy in particular:

²²⁶ Cited in *The Life and Works of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Michael Millgate (London: Macmillan, 1984; Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1985), p. 373.

²²⁷ Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, pp. 172, 215.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

²²⁹ Margaret Oliphant, 'The Anti-Marriage League', *Blackwood's Magazine*, CLIX (Jan 1896), 135-49; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 248-52 (I, 249-50).

²³⁰ Anon., *The Sun* (Nov 20, 1895); rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 239 (I, 239). For a discussion of Hardy's relationship to the Decadent Movement, see Gillian Beer, 'Hardy and Decadence', in *Celebrating Thomas Hardy: Insights and Appreciations*, ed. Charles P.C. Pettit (London: Macmillan; New York: St Martin's Press, 1996), pp. 103-14.

²³¹ Walter Bagehot, for instance, believed that the only justification for depictions of the imperfect and the ugly was to remind readers of the perfect and beautiful. One of the most grotesque examples of 'ugly' poetry was Robert Browning's 'Caliban upon Setebos' (1864) (the superlative instance of Browning's art as far as Bagehot was concerned). By acknowledging Browning as a 'realist' while simultaneously repudiating what he wrote, Bagehot exposed a depth of mind which Oscar Wilde was to perceive as a typical characteristic of humanity in the nineteenth century: 'The nineteenth century dislike of Realism is the rage of Caliban seeing his own face in a glass. The nineteenth century dislike of Romance is the rage of Caliban not seeing his own face in a glass' (cited by Roy E. Gridley, *Browning* (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 115).

²³² J.M. Barrie, 'Thomas Hardy: the Historian of Wessex', *Contemporary Review*, LVI (1889), 57.

²³³ D.F. Hannigan, *Westminster Review*, CXXXVIII (Dec 1892), 655-9; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 223-6 (I, 224).

Study of French authors seems to be having a strong influence on Mr Hardy's work just lately. Realism as a theory seems in danger of possessing him at times...In that part of realism which is not theory, but a necessary artistic instinct, Mr Hardy has always been strong.²³⁴

Though Hardy was deeply interested in the realism controversy that raged in France between 1887 and 1897, he did not imitate their techniques, and in 1897 wrote to Florence Henniker to correct this assumption:

You mistake in supposing I admire Zola. It is just what I don't do. I think him no artist, & too material. I feel that the animal side of human nature should never be dwelt on except as a contrast or foil to its spiritual side. (CL, II, 157)²³⁵

Though this comment exonerates the thematic and ideological polarities which formally structure *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, 'orthodox reviews' resented what they saw as a 'sordid' influence and 'expressed some alarm'²³⁶ at its appearance in the former:

The influence of the so-called 'realism', as understood in France in the latter part of the nineteenth century, is strong both for good and ill in Mr Hardy's latest work, which in some respects is Zola-esque to a degree likely to alienate not a few well-meaning persons; and in more than once instance we doubt if he has not sacrificed the higher truth of imagination for a narrower and lower kind of fidelity to the ignoble facts of life.²³⁷

The repercussion were, however, 'both for good and ill', and *The Woodlanders* and *A Pair of Blue Eyes* skilfully approached French *lubricifée* 'without awakening the non-conformist conscience in our strangely constituted society'.²³⁸ *Jude the Obscure* was another matter. As things stood in the 1880s and early 1890s, Hardy's audience disapproved of his choice of material, and the judgements he presumed to make increased their dissatisfaction. Repeatedly charged with having 'violated the fundamental

²³⁴ Richard le Gallienne, *Star* (Dec 23, 1891); rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 167-69 (I, 168).

²³⁵ Also rpt. in *One Rare Fair Woman*, p. 63.

²³⁶ Hannigan, *TH:CA*, I, 225.

²³⁷ Anon., *Review of Reviews* (Feb 1892); rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 191. For an exploration of the distinct Zolaesque colouring of Hardy's work, see D.G. Mason, 'Hardy and Zola: A Comparative Study of *Tess* and *Abbe Mouret*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, VII:3 (Oct 1991), 89-102, and Roger Ebbatson, 'Hardy and Zola Revisited', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, XIII:1 (Feb 1997), 83. Bjork also considers the similarities between the novels ('1867' NB, entry 187n.). Although Hardy admitted, 'I am very little read in Zola' (*LY*, p. 42; Nov 1895), there are extensive notes in the '1867' Notebooks from *Abbe Mouret* (entries 180-192), which Hardy read in 1886/7, and *Germinal*, or, *Master and Man* (entries 193-201). For a study of the similarities between Hardy and the French naturalists in general, and Zola in particular, see William Newton, 'Hardy and the Naturalists: Their Use of Physiology', *The Morning Post*, XLIX (Aug 1952), 28-42.

²³⁸ R.Y. Tyrrell, *Fortnightly Review*, LXV, n.s. LIX (June 1896), 857-64; rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 286-92 (I, 287).

purpose of the art of fiction'²³⁹ - to present a 'true' and not a 'false' view of life - it became clear that he could not win.

HARDY AND GISSING

In a climate dominated and curtailed by the contents of Mrs Grundy's bouquet, the only major Victorian novelist who managed - out of an unshakeable confidence in belonging to the dominant social and political class - to stand apart and criticize, and yet remain acceptable and accepted, was Dickens. These privileges permitted Dickens, so Gissing felt, 'to say aloud with impunity that which all his hearers say within themselves dumbly, inarticulately',²⁴⁰ a formulation germane to the *fin de siècle* writers.²⁴¹ James took a disparaging view of the 'moral timidity of the usual English novelist; with his (or with her) aversion to face the difficulties with which on every side the treatment of reality bristles' (*AF*, p. 43).²⁴² James's prime transgressor, admitting this limitation as a severe fault, berates 'the charlatanry pervading so much of English fiction' (*CEF*, p. 129) which knowingly falsifies the truth and provides the 'spurious...unreal and meretricious' to please 'the Grundyist and subscriber' (*CEF*, p. 130). Hardy's novels inaugurate the necessary, liberating 'crash of broken commandments' (*CEF*, p. 129).

For Hardy, as for Gissing, the dilemma lay not so much in articulating their readers' submerged thoughts as in manipulating current attitudes and their own narratives. Hardy delved beneath peripheral assumptions to what was becoming an increasingly inaccessible reality, and addressed 'that which all his hearers say within themselves' in the 1892 Preface to *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. The 'responsive spirit' which greeted the book was 'quite contrary to avowed conventions', and was taken as proof

²³⁹ Anon., *The Independent* (Feb 25, 1892); rpt. *TH:CA*, I, 197-200 (I, 198).

²⁴⁰ George Gissing, *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study* (1898; London: Gresham Co., 1904), p. 130.

²⁴¹ See Simon Gatrell, 'England, Europe, and Empire: Hardy, Meredith, and Gissing', in *The Ends of the Earth: 1876-1918*, ed. Simon Gatrell (London: Ashfield, 1992), pp. 67-82.

²⁴² At this point it is revealing to note that in 1890-1 James, Hardy and Besant all discovered common ground, each contributing to a series of symposia in the *New Review* covering such topics as 'Candour in English Fiction' (*New Review*, 2 (1890), 6-21; contributions by Walter Besant, Mrs Lynn Lyton, Thomas Hardy); 'The Science of Fiction' (*New Review*, 4 (1891), 304-19; contributions by Paul Bourget, Besant, Hardy); and 'The Science of Criticism' (*New Review*, 4 (1891), 398-411; contributions by James, Andrew Lang, Edmund Gosse).

that 'the plan of laying down a story on the lines of tacit opinion, instead of making it square with the merely vocal formulae of society, is not altogether a wrong one' (*TD*, Pref). Hardy took a considerable risk in daring to utter those ironic truths 'which we all know in our hearts, and are all forbidden to say aloud',²⁴³ and Gissing enthused over the novel's blatant belligerence: 'It is glaringly unconventional, and earns its applause in the very teeth of a great deal of puritanical prejudice.'²⁴⁴

Scientific objectivism continued to fight abstract subjectivism, both methods named themselves 'realistic', and yet the competitors felt realism to be a matter of degree and the artist's temperament. Gissing, the archetypal English realist, or, more precisely, 'Our English Realist',²⁴⁵ contributes yet another perspective although his maxims - straightforward objectivity is impossible, 'there is no science in fiction',²⁴⁶ the perceived absorbs the personality of the perceiver - are hardly original. His importance in the development of English fiction is, rather, bound up with his ambiguous critical reception. By the turn of the century, more enlightened opinion as to what passed as realistic fiction had so shifted that for what Hardy had been reprimanded, Gissing was congratulated: 'It is the fact transfigured by the imagination that one seeks in a work of art, and the finest realism is not found in the record, but in the interpretation of the record.'²⁴⁷ Gissing, persuasive by his sincerity, shares much with Eliot on this point,²⁴⁸ both regarding the life of the poor as offering ample 'artistic material' which enlarges the imagination: 'Half the brutal cruelties perpetrated by uneducated men and women are directly traceable to lack of the imaginative spirit, which comes to mean lack of kindly sympathy.'²⁴⁹ And just as Eliot will show us an ugly old woman peeling carrots, so Biffen, the impoverished

²⁴³ Clementina Black, *Illustrated London News* (Jan 9, 1892), 50.

²⁴⁴ Letter to Bertz, Jan 15, 1892; *George Gissing: Letters to Eduard Bertz*, ed. Arthur C. Young (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press: 1961), p. 142. See also Peter Coustillas, 'Gissing on Hardy: A Novelist's View of a Contemporary Writer', *Cahiers Victorians et Edouardiens* [Special Issue: *Studies in Thomas Hardy*, ed. Annie Escuret (Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry, 1980)], 12 (1980), 1-18.

²⁴⁵ Anon., *The Daily Chronicle* (Sept 28, 1904), p. 3; rpt. *Gissing: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Pierre Coustillas (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 437-44 (p. 437). Hereafter cited as *G:CH*. For informative discussions, see V. Woolf, 'George Gissing', in *The Common Reader: Second Series* (London: Hogarth Press, 1932), pp. 220-5; rpt. *Collected Essays*, ed. Leonard Woolf, 2 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1966), I, 297-301; Austin Harrison, 'George Gissing', *Nineteenth Century*, LX (Sept 1906), 453-68.

²⁴⁶ Gissing, 'Realism in Fiction', *Humanitarian* (July 1895); rpt. *Selections Autobiographical and Imaginative from the Works of George Gissing*, ed. A.C. Gissing (London: Jonathan Cape, 1929), p. 220.

²⁴⁷ Anon., 'An Idealistic Realist', *Atlantic Monthly*, XLIII (Feb 1904), 280-2 (p. 280). Hardy had been campaigning for this for years: the common concern should be 'less with the subject treated than with its treatment' (*PRF*, p. 120).

²⁴⁸ For a discussion of the influence of Eliot on Gissing see Jacob Korg, *George Gissing: A Critical Biography* (Brighton: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980), pp. 259-60.

²⁴⁹ Gissing, *Demos: A Story of English Socialism* (1886; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co, Inc., n.d.), Ch. X.

scholar of *New Grub Street* (1891), works on a meticulous account of the life of a grocer.

Critics in particular suffered a 'lack of imaginative spirit'. Consensus held that visually interesting scenes were inestimably more deserving of notice and respect than the ugly, banal alternative which amounted to an untrue and 'distorted vision'.²⁵⁰ Gissing aimed to elicit a 'sincere', not 'distorted', view of modern life, and 'in so far as fidelity to the fact is essential to art (and to realistic art such fidelity is the one thing needful)',²⁵¹ he accomplished his ambition, a position which aligns him not only with James but Duranty who, according to Zola, asserted that 'le réalisme conclut à la reproduction exacte, complète, sincère, du milieu social, de l'époque où l'on vit'.²⁵² Any writer who operated this realistic precept invited the associated ignominy, but Gissing was resilient enough to defend his position publicly in 'The Place of Realism in Fiction' (1895):

Realism...signifies nothing more than artistic sincerity in the portrayal of contemporary life; it merely contrasts with the habit of mind which assumes that a novel is written 'to please people', that disagreeable facts must always be kept out of sight...and all the rest of it.²⁵³

Frustration and impatience compelled Gissing to attend to those 'disagreeable facts' in *New Grub Street*: he was courting disaster, and the novel was doomed to be 'repugnant to all those who hold that the true aim of the artist is to represent the beautiful and to idealize the facts of common life'.²⁵⁴ As with the advent of *Jude the Obscure* four years later, *New Grub Street* was excoriated for its 'gloomy... grimness',²⁵⁵ and, for the majority, was judged too true to be palatable: 'The book is almost terrible in its realism, and gives a picture, cruelly precise in every detail, of this commercial age'.²⁵⁶ Lang questioned the propriety of the numerous references to Gissing's "'poignant realism'" by arguing that the author's perceptions were indicative instead of 'a perverted idealism,

²⁵⁰ Anon., *Spectator*, LXXIV (Feb 9, 1895), 205-6 (p. 206).

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Zola, *Oeuvres Complètes*, X, 1345. (This section appears in 'Le Réalisme', pp. 1343-6, in *Le Roman Expérimental*.)

²⁵³ Gissing, 'The Place of Realism in Fiction', *The Humanitarian* (July 1895), 14-16; rpt. *Selections Autobiographical and Imaginative from the Works of George Gissing*, ed. A.C. Gissing (London: Jonathan Cape, 1929).

²⁵⁴ L.F. Austin, *Illustrated London News*, XCVIII (May 2, 1891), 571.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Anon., *Saturday Review*, LXXI (May 9, 1891), 551.

idealism on the seamy side',²⁵⁷ and so absolute and obsessive was Gissing's 'insistence upon unnecessary details' that he was accused of annihilating all illusions: 'all sentiment is killed by too accurate observation, too careful description, and too accurate analysis.'²⁵⁸ His severe directness and 'sense of perfect reality'²⁵⁹ was more than the public or critics were prepared to tolerate.

Gissing might seem to insist upon the sordid side of life, but he had a passionate love of beauty, and whereas other writers found it more convenient to avert their eyes from the repulsive, Gissing turned, fascinated, to the spectacle and remained riveted in the same way as Hardy.²⁶⁰ For the *fin de siècle* novelists, ordinary reality functioned as a backcloth against which the noble, subjective vision was thrown into stark, ironic juxtaposition, but whereas Gissing's view glances back to an earlier time, Hardy looks to the future. Where we watch Gissing trying to forge an organic connection between the two conditions - and this epitomizes his art - Hardy, by the time of *Jude the Obscure*, has resigned himself to the futility of considering, let alone realizing, such a reconciliation. Gissing hopes, Hardy despairs. Even so, despite his belief in possible transience, Gissing's cynical conclusion on the artistic climate in 1886 bears heavily upon the disparity between inner desire and public duty:

'The misery of it is that, writing for English people, one may not be thorough; reticences and superficialities have so often to fill the places where one is willing to put in honest work.' (*EL*, p. 239; July 1886)

Gissing took bitter exception to novelists whose capitulation before the tyranny of convention compromised their artistic integrity: 'Thackeray, when he knowingly wrote below the demands of his art to conciliate Mrs Grundy, betrayed his trust,'²⁶¹ and 'avoidance of the disagreeable, as a topic uncongenial to art - this is Dickens'

²⁵⁷ Andrew Lang's and Walter Besant's discussion, *Author*, II:2 (July 1, 1891), 43-5, 51; rpt. *G:CH*, pp. 183-5 (p. 183).

²⁵⁸ Anon., *Literature*, V (Nov 11, 1899), 470-1; rpt. *G:CH*, pp. 357-8 (p. 357).

²⁵⁹ Anon., *Whitehall Review* (April 18, 1891), 19-20; rpt. *G:CH*, pp. 169-70 (p. 169).

²⁶⁰ See, for instance, the famous swamp episode (*FMC*, XLIV), and the 'offensive' beauty of the Talbothays garden (*TD*, XIX).

²⁶¹ Letter to *Pall Mall Gazette* (Dec 15, 1884), 2. Thackeray held that 'the Art of the Novel is to represent Nature: to convey as strongly as possible the sentiment of reality' (Miriam Allott, ed., *Novelists on the Novel* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959), p. 67). Hardy's early response to Thackeray underwent major reappraisal: 'He is considered to be the greatest novelist of the day - looking at novel writing of the highest kind as a perfect and truthful representation of actual life - which is no doubt the proper view to take'. *Vanity Fair* is considered 'one of his best' when appreciated not as instructive but as a Picture (*EL*, p. 53; Dec 1863).

principle'.²⁶² Hannigan, picking up Gissing's anxieties about Dickens, nominated Hardy as the final stage in a regressive process:

The coarser accidents of life were absolutely ignored...This was the *ne plus ultra* of decency; Thackeray and George Eliot relaxed this intensity of prudishness...and here is Mr Hardy ready to say any mortal thing.²⁶³

In Hannigan's estimation, *Jude the Obscure* deserved its damning because of 'its flagrant disregard of Mrs Grundy's tender feelings',²⁶⁴ and its 'decadent' author became infamous for his inordinate temerity: 'Where Stevenson saw "peril", Mr Hardy deliberately wades in.'²⁶⁵

TOWARDS A NEW REALISM

After the fiasco occasioned by *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Hardy declared, 'no more novel-writing for me. A man must be a fool to deliberately stand up to be shot at' (*LY*, p. 7; April 1892), and then proceeded to make himself a target with *Jude the Obscure* and *The Well-Beloved*.²⁶⁶ In 1904, while contemplating plans for future artistic deviance, Hardy admitted that, given current conditions, old notions could not

bear stretching further...one must make an independent plunge, embodying the real, if only temporary, thought of the age. But I expect I shall catch it hot and strong for attempting it! (*LY*, p. 104; Feb 1904)

Hardy takes vicarious satisfaction in anticipating the realization of this recalcitrant gesture, and by 'over-stepping the standard boundary set up for the thought of the age by the proctors of opinion' in *The Dynasts* (1904, 1906), he bowed before the inevitable:

²⁶² Gissing, *Charles Dickens*, p. 90.

²⁶³ Hannigan, *TH:CA*, I, 257.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 260.

²⁶⁵ A.J. Butler, 'Mr Hardy as a Decadent', *National Review*, XXVII (May 1896), 384-90; rpt. *H:CH*, pp. 284-291 (p. 290). Interestingly enough it was Moore who initiated this debate, and Gissing, by clarifying the ethical responsibility shouldered by the Art of Fiction, perpetuated it: 'it enables one to tell the truth about human beings in a way which is impossible in actual life' (*Gissing's Commonplace Book*, ed. Jacob Korg (New York Public Library, 1962), p. 69).

²⁶⁶ 'Certain critics affected to find unmentionable atrocities in its pages' (*LY*, p. 59; March 1897). See also *PNB*, pp. 246-7 for the relevant omitted passages.

'The very fact of my having tried to spread over art the latest illumination of the time has darkened counsel in respect of me' (ib.). Hardy's cynicism echoes the first murmurings of discontent which appeared as early as 1865 when Thomson's Dickensian allusion openly challenged the thoughtless subservience of creative art to institutionalized Bumbleism (the publishing houses): 'Woe to anyone who shall have the audacity to shock his cherished, his sacred convictions, on any social or moral or religious matter!'²⁶⁷ As far as the public were concerned, 'the real offence' (*D:PS* 2, p. 145) committed by Hardy was the sheer 'audacity' of his presumption; his contravention of the three 'sacred convictions' was equalled only by his brazen subversion of orthodox literary precepts.

Though giants such as Eliot, James and Meredith were ranged against him, Hardy acknowledged with pride a co-renegade in Swinburne, designated himself the inheritor of his anti-authoritarianism, and was partial to a statement confounding the two: 'Swinburne planteth, Hardy watereth and Satan giveth the increase' (*LY*, p. 111; June 1905).²⁶⁸ What must have galled his contemporaries most was Hardy's success in spite of his notoriety; what exasperated the 'good souls' holding up a pleasant spray for Mrs Grundy was 'why so dangerous a writer enjoy[ed] so high a reputation'.²⁶⁹ Perhaps the answer is simply because a rebel is admired. Hardy was confident enough to meet popular enmity head-on; he injected an intensely personal, imaginative dimension into phenomenal reality, and transformed its expression in literature; he revolutionized the understanding and application of fictional realism, and helped release the nineteenth-century novel from its submission to fact. Admittedly, though his predecessors and contemporaries made invaluable contributions to the evolution of the fictional form, it was Hardy's indomitable and intense interrogation of and experimentation with the plurality underpinning reality and literary realism that made the breakthrough. He plunged into hitherto untouched areas, and, of all of the *fin de siècle* novelists, stands as the age's superlative artistic disputant.

²⁶⁷ James Thomson, 'Bumble, Bumbledom, Bumbleism', *National Reformer* (Nov 5, 1865); rpt. *Selected Prose of James Thomson* ('B.I'), ed. W.D. Schaefer (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), p. 123.

²⁶⁸ Merryn Williams, 'Hardy the Victorian', in *A Preface to Hardy* (London and New York: Longman, 1976; 2nd edn. 1993), pp. 54-84, considers the influence of the great Victorian rebel, Swinburne' (p. 54), on Hardy. Hardy also recalls how he and Swinburne 'laughed and consoled each other on having been the two most abused of living writers; he for *Poems and Ballads*, I for *Jude the Obscure*' (*LY*, p. 112; June 1905).

²⁶⁹ J.E. Barton, 'The Poetry of Thomas Hardy' (1923), in Johnson, *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, pp. 259-95 (p. 260).

Although a new kind of writer and fictional form had clearly emerged by 1895, the typical features emerged a decade before in Henley's celebration of Meredith's *Diana of the Crossways* (1885): 'This is indeed the merit and distinction of art: to be more real than reality, to be not nature, but nature's essence. The function of the artist is not to copy, but to synthesize'.²⁷⁰ The ideal realist, or the realist of the ideal, induces a dynamic rapport between the phenomenal and the noumenal by an 'imaginative infusion of the mass of observed fact'.²⁷¹ The age called for a truce. Stevenson's 'A Gossip on Romance' (1882) believed romance capable of transcending antithetical definitions: 'It reaches into the highest abstraction of the ideal; it does not refuse the most pedestrian realism',²⁷² and the following year, his 'A Note on Realism' drew the limits concomitant with examining realism and romance in mutual isolation:

All representative art, which can be said to live, is both realistic and ideal; ...The immediate danger of the realist is...in the insane pursuit of completion, to immolate his readers under facts...The danger of the idealist is, of course, to become null and lose all grip of fact.²⁷³

For James, though there is a difference in kind, the undeniable truth of his pre-emptory disclaimer is clearly justified: 'it is as difficult...to trace the dividing line between the real and the romantic as to plant a milestone between north and south' (*AN*, p. 37); great literature precludes such crude partitioning, and the best interest is generated when a writer 'commits himself in both directions' (*AN*, p. 31).

Despite these pioneering theories, the true potential of dynamic realism was not truly accepted and tolerated until 1890:

Perhaps realism in literary art may be approximately defined as the science of exact presentment of many complexities, abstract and concrete, in one truthful synthesis...Thus regarded, realism and romance are found to be as indissoluble as soul and body...[T]he true artist...is neither a realist nor a romanticist.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ W.E. Henley, *Athenaeum*, 1 (1885), 339-40. It is useful to note that Clementina Black likened *Tess* to Moore's 'Esther Waters' (1894) in that both works were founded on the recognition 'that the richest kind of womanly nature, the most discrete, sincere, and passionate, is the most liable to be caught in the sort of pitfall which social convention stamps as an irretrievable disgrace' (*TH:CA*, 1, 179).

²⁷¹ Anon., *Time*, 1, n.s. (1885), 633.

²⁷² R.L. Stevenson, 'Literary Papers', *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*, Vailima Edn., 20 vols (London: Cassell & Co., 1906-7).

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, XV, 263, 268.

²⁷⁴ William Sharp, *Academy*, XXXVII (1890), 41-2; cited in Kenneth Graham, *English Criticism of the Novel. 1865-1900* (Oxford:

Sharp's reference to the 'shaping power of the highest qualities of the methods of genuine realism and...genuine romance'²⁷⁵ neatly encapsulates the hitherto antagonized 'shaping spirit of Imagination'²⁷⁶ and 'shaping strength' of Science. Although extreme subjectivity was not condoned during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, mounting resistance to French theories, especially those dictating the impersonality of art, saw the 1890s more vulnerable to those who supported the subjective cause, and a new, idealistic realism began to assume the initiative. It was clear that literature would benefit little from the perpetuation of the kind of polemic that had surrounded realism in France mid-century, and a profitable compromise was reached: the process by which reality was determined required the intercession of an imaginative catalyst, a progressive insight which looks back to the monistic philosophy of Hume and Shelley.

It was Proust who detected the common denominator between the philosophers' theories and Hardy's experimentalism. Addressing the subjective nature of experience and the primary significance of the impression, Proust saw the potential in Hardy's intuitions and, in effect, brought to fruition what Hardy had conceived: 'Every impression is double and the one half which is sheathed in the object is prolonged in ourselves by another half which we alone can know'.²⁷⁷ Intense identification with this personal half resurrects the original experience in its entirety, but only one literary tool is sufficiently potent to communicate this vision to other minds, while simultaneously expressing the mind's separation from, yet possession of, the perceived object:

What we call reality is a certain connexion...that is suppressed in a simple cinematographic vision...which the writer has to rediscover in order to link... the two sets of phenomena which reality joins together....[T]ruth will be attained by him only when he takes two different objects...and encloses them...[W]e succeed in extracting their common essence and in reuniting them to each other, liberated from the contingencies of time, within a metaphor.²⁷⁸

Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 56.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ S.T. Coleridge, 'Dejection: An Ode' (1892), in *Coleridge: Poetical Works*, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), line 86.

²⁷⁷ Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, III, 927.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., III, 924-5.

Metaphor conciliates two realms and generates a world, real without being actual, ideal without being abstract, in which the dual nature of the 'impression' is respected. It was this kind of synthetic realism as practised by Hardy, and later confirmed by Proust and the Modernists, which liberated a single word from the restrictive interpretation imposed upon it by its early practitioners with their reductive aesthetic methodology and materialistic creeds.

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